May 1999

TRAINING JOURNAL

formerly TRAINING OFFICER

- **Team facilitation**
- **Fundamental beliefs**
- **Career development**
- **Educational technologies**

GOLDEN PAGE AWARD WINNER 1999
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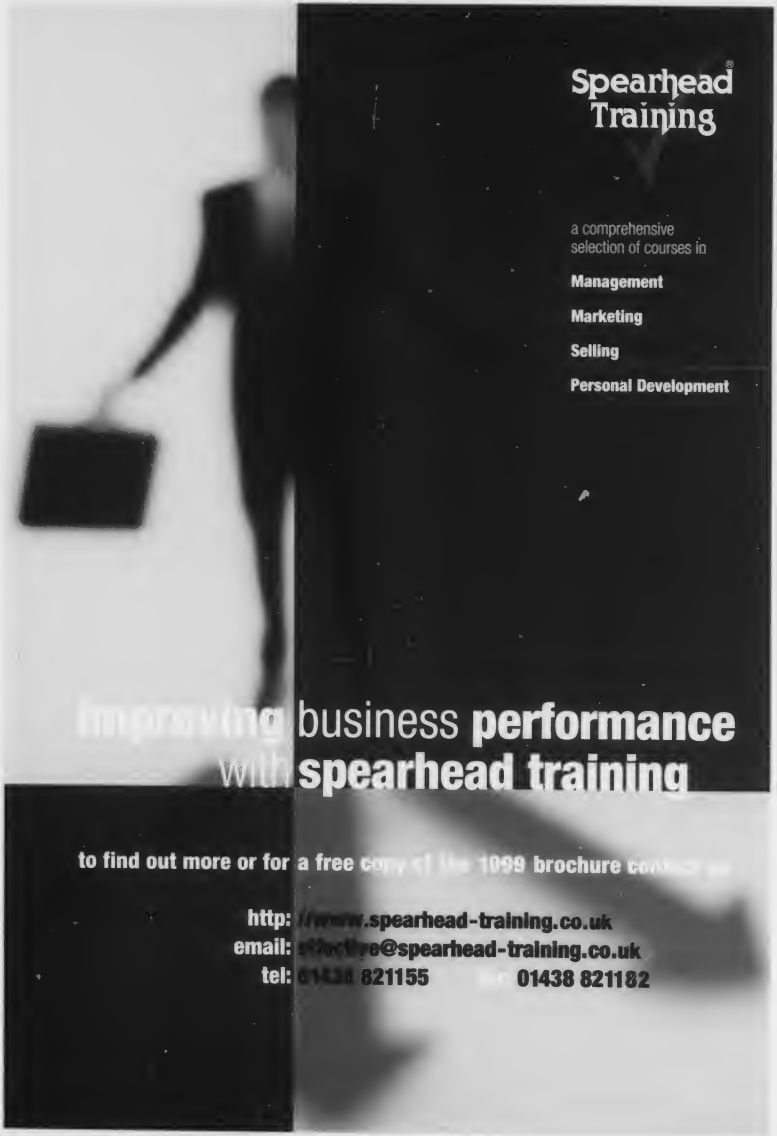
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Letter from the Editor

It has been quite an eventful month for us all here at Training Journal. Early in April, we received news that the journal has won an Anbar Golden Page Award for the 'most readable content in the training and development category'. These awards are presented annually to those leading periodicals that consistently deliver excellent articles. Amongst those specialist reviewers on the accreditation board are Professor Philip Kotler of Northwestern University and Professor Cary Cooper of UMIST. As I'm sure you can imagine, we are all feeling really very excited and honoured.

Were you one of the many people who came to see us at HRD Week 1999? There were lots of familiar faces and many new ones this year. We were delighted that there was a constant stream of visitors to our stand, nearly 500 of whom signed up, without hesitation, for our special show offer of a free three-month trial subscription to the journal. If you were one of them – happy reading! Sue (who looks after subscriptions and advertising) was footsore at the end of her three-day stint in manning the stand, but exhilarated by the tremendous interest shown in the journal. During HRD Week, I was lucky enough to get the opportunity to attend a range of stimulating and informative conference sessions. More about the conference on page 24.

This month's issue of the journal includes articles about development centres, 360° feedback, the influence of fundamental beliefs, facilitation skills, continuing professional development and educational technologies, in addition to our regular features. We hope you enjoy reading it.

Sylvia Worth

TO ADVERTISE IN TRAINING JOURNAL

Contact Sue Mennell on 01353 665779 ext 211 or fax 01353 663644, e-mail sue@fenman.co.uk

Martin Delahoussaye joins Fenman as Publisher of Training Journal. His career in publishing for training and development spans nearly twenty years. He is the former European Marketing Manager of McGraw-Hill and Managing Director of Gower Publishing, and has returned to the UK after five years managing an independent publishing venture in Australia. Educated at Queen Mary/Charles Chute School in Basingstoke, Hampshire, Martin holds a diploma in computer-based instructional design from the Sydney Institute of Technology.

LETTERS

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What does the Green Paper mean for lifelong learning

Organisations have been trying to create learning opportunities for their employees for many years. This has been in the form of on-the-job training, internal or external training courses and sometimes further education. With this in mind, the concept of lifelong learning should be a welcome initiative for all, including training providers.

However, the involvement of some training providers in the Government's commitment to lifelong learning is a concern. Training providers remain unclear about the definition of lifelong learning and how they will be expected to support the concept. The need for clarity is increasingly important with the introduction of Individual Learning Accounts, as announced in the Budget.

Not only does the lifelong learning concept appear to be biased towards non-professionals, but also it does not seem to take into account those who have already been through higher education and need a more in-depth level of development. How can we make the concept appeal to the high-flyers?

To some extent, learning has always taken place within organisations – mainly to get people up and running in the job. For some levels of worker NVQs could be the answer, though in some professions they are still seen as the low-level option. TECs may be suited to supporting NVQ implementation within companies and the Government may support this through Individual Learning Accounts, but what about organisations introducing change at more strategic levels?

There are still a large number of people in the UK with low aspirations, and lifelong learning may encourage some people to re-enter education and development. Their motivation to do so should be clear, and should be supported by the organisation. If the concept of lifelong learning is to succeed, it needs to be aimed at and available to all through a multitude of interventions, not just a minority number of the UK's working-age people.

Ralph Houston and Caroline Keeling
Fieldon-Cegos Ltd
Manchester

Training Journal survey

We have mailed a questionnaire about the journal to all subscribers, so you should receive this within the next few days. We would be very grateful if you could please spare a few moments of your time to complete this. Not only will it help us to improve our service to you, but if you return the form by 21st May your name will be entered into a prize draw, giving you the opportunity to win a FREE Fenman video of your choice.

MAs head for Europe

Seven Modern Apprentices from London have recently set off for Italy to take part in the Focus Central London European Placement Programme (in collaboration with the Leonardo Da Vinci programme). Set up by Focus Central London Training & Enterprise Council, the scheme has been designed to give MAs work experience in other EU member states. For twelve weeks, the apprentices will be living, studying and working in Padova, near Venice. The programme will start with a four-week language course, giving the apprentices basic conversational skills to get by in the host country. They will be assessed while they are at the language school, and matched with a local company for eight weeks of work experience, similar to the work they do in their present jobs. At the end of the programme, they will each return to their London employers to complete their Modern Apprenticeships.

Carers need real skills

The traditional view that those whose jobs are to look after the very young and the very old need skills that come naturally (and especially to women) is overturned by a new report from the independent Institute for Employment Studies. The report, commissioned by the Department for Education and Employment, is the latest in a series of skills reviews in key occupations. It marks the changes in skill requirements for childcare and eldercare, and outlines the challenges to this service sector.

Care is traditionally viewed as low-key domestic supervision and within caring services there are few powerful drivers to improvement in training and standards. Societal attitudes determine the value attached to childcare and eldercare, rather than the competitive pressures that motivate employers in other industries.

The authors call for a change in attitudes if resources for adequate training, plus reward and recognition of skills, are to match those of other occupations. Somehow childcare and eldercare, though two quite distinct occupations, must be seen to develop into more desirable occupations.

The 1989 Children Act and other pre-school education initiatives place a new range of demands on childcarers. Understanding how children develop, and identifying opportunities for them to develop and learn, is a fundamental part of what childcare has come to mean: it is no longer merely domestic care. The educational aspect of the early years, especially basic literacy and numeracy, is now also a formal feature of childcare. In addition, keeping records, understanding legislation and being administratively competent, are skills that underpin the ability to deliver these requirements.

'Supporting Skills for Care Workers' (Dench S, La Valle I, Evans C, IES Report 347, 1999) may be purchased from Grantham Book Services Ltd, Isaac Newton Way, Alma Park Industrial Estate, Grantham NG31 9SD; tel 01476 541080.

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PROVEN TO WORK

IN BRIEF

Work is about to begin on a £5 million development in Aberdeen, funded by investment from Liberty Mutual, an insurer of occupational disability and a global provider of health and safety services. The campus will mark Aberdeen as an international centre of excellence in occupational health services, training, teaching and research and will benefit local and national businesses in all sectors.

Parity plc, international IT consultancy group has acquired the entire share capital of TMS Information Solutions Ltd, a specialist developer of intranets and knowledge management systems.

Keele Conference Park has been announced as The Best Academic Venue at the 1999 Meetings & Incentive Travel Awards. The award was sponsored by Connect Venues, the consortium promoting the facilities of more than 100 universities and colleges based throughout the UK.

The Civil Service College has won a contract worth approximately ECU 200,000 to support reform and development at the Bulgarian Ministry of Finance. Funded by the EU PHARE programme, the college's brief includes the development of a fresh mission statement, as well as providing assistance with human resources and information systems.

Jo Bond has been appointed as the new Managing Director of Right Management Consultants, formerly known as Right Cavendish. The company, which specialises in career management consulting, executive consulting, executive coaching, leadership development and technology-based employee assessment, is the UK subsidiary of the US company Right Management Consultants Inc.

Jacqui Henderson, the Chief Executive of the Training Enterprise Council's National Council, has been appointed as a member of NEBS Management's Executive Board, the specialist management awarding body.

Going to work can damage your hearing

Working in a call centre, as a motorcycle courier or as a sound engineer may be a hazard to your hearing according to Indecent Exposure (a report from the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)) and the TUC. It highlights professions not usually associated with occupational deafness, as well as looking at those where risk to hearing is established, but not enough is being done to protect the workforce.

Research commissioned across a range of industries revealed that nearly a quarter of respondents reported listening to uncomfortably loud sounds for more than four hours a day. One-third said that work tasks leave them with dullness of hearing and nearly half said they were concerned that noise levels at work were affecting their hearing. The research shows that employers are not taking the necessary action to protect their staff. More than half of the employees who responded had not received any information or training about the risks of noise at work from their employers and this increased to 90 per cent for call centre workers.

Industries not usually associated with being 'noisy' but where there is a potential risk of hearing damage include the rapidly growing call centre industry. Some 39 per cent of call centre workers in the survey expressed concern that their hearing was being damaged as a result of exposure to noise at work. Those whose jobs depend on travelling by motorcycle (such as couriers and taxi drivers) are exposed to air turbulence, 'wind roar' through their helmets. This is in addition to engine noise and constant high noise levels from their radios to their controllers.

Ufl reveals its plans

Ufl has revealed its plans to revolutionise the way people learn through a new learning network across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Taking forward the Government's concept of the University for Industry, Ufl aims to provide information and advice to 2.5 million people a year, and create demand for up to one million courses and learning packages a year – to be met by the Ufl network and existing learning providers.

Ufl will be fully operational by autumn 2000. In the meantime many of its services will gradually be introduced. The first Learning Centres will be piloted this year. Ufl has also announced it is now seeking suppliers for Ufl learning materials.

Ufl will develop new ways for people to get impartial information and advice about learning opportunities. Where there are gaps in the provision of learning materials Ufl will broker the creation of new ones. Whether people or businesses need basic numeracy and literacy or advanced business management skills, they will be able to use Ufl through:

- the Learning Direct helpline,
- a new website, which will provide on-line advice, seminars, discussion groups and links into courses and materials, available from spring 2000
- a network of up to 1,000 Learning Centres, which will be owned and operated by local learning providers – the first pilots opening at the end of this year.

Ufl will help people and employers to continue with learning by providing ongoing support, including personal support, contacts with other learners and on-line help over the Internet. Individual and corporate membership will enable people to track their learning progress, get regular updates on relevant further learning opportunities and try 'taster' courses.

Ufl's priority areas for the first few years will include information and technology skills, basic literacy and numeracy, skills for small- and medium-sized businesses and four business sectors: automotive components; multimedia; environmental technology and services; and distributive and retail trades.

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Make Learning at Work Day special

Peter Honey BA (Psych), D Litt, Dip Ed, FIMC, FIPD, is a Chartered Psychologist and Management Consultant. He may be contacted on 01628 633946; fax 01628 633262; e-mail peterhoney@peterhoney.co.uk

May is a significant month for learning. The week of 16 May is Adult Learners Week (promoted by The National Organisation for Adult Learning) and 20 May is Learning At Work Day (promoted by the Campaign for Learning). So, how about just for a day, positively discriminating in favour of learning. The advantages of effortless learning are clearly considerable; it doesn't take any extra time, or cost any extra money or require any extra resources or conscious effort. It just happens as a consequence of keeping busy and doing things. There are, however, some snags. Automatic, effortless learning can't be planned, is hard to pinpoint and share, defies any quality assurance and makes the business of successfully transferring learning from one situation to another less likely. Furthermore, it you learn effortlessly, by some process of osmosis, it is beyond the reach of continuous improvement. You could never learn to become a more effective learner.

The real challenge is to make learning a more conscious activity than it normally is in most workplaces. It might even kick-start a learning-at-work habit rather than being a one day wonder.

Here are some ideas that you could either use yourselt on Learning at Work Day and/or use to encourage other people in your organisation to have a go. The ideas are all things that could be carried out within the confines of a day and many of them are 'quickies' that would only take an hour or so.

- Get people to use someone they don't normally talk to/work with as a sounding board for half an hour and vice versa. Encourage them to talk through a work problem or issue and see if a way forward becomes clearer as a consequence.
- Clear a large notice-board for the day and get people to post notices 'advertising' a useful lesson they have learned at work during the last month or so.
- Have a learning circle where people meet for an hour to swap experiences and identify lessons learned.
- Take a recent mistake and use it, non-accusingly, as a learning opportunity.
- Have a question time session for an hour where people can ask a senior manager about the organisation's purposes, values, strategy, future plans etc.
- Involve people in some what if/crystal ball gazing. What it interest rates fall/increase? What if our competitors cut their prices? What if we empowered people more?
- Ask people to brainstorm ways to get learning to be more of an everyday occurrence at work.
- Have an upward feedback exercise where people complete the following four sentences for their boss. I wish you'd stop doing ..., I wish you'd start doing ..., I wish you'd do less of ..., I wish you'd do more of ...
- Conduct a benchmarking exercise with another department in the organisation or an outside organisation quite different to your own.
- Get everyone to give a brief presentation on what they do and how they are going to do it even better.
- Get people to swap their successes and best practices
- Have a session where people discover their learning preferences and work out the implications tor their future learning
- Have a values clarification session where people share three things that are really important to them at work (for example, 'that people are honest and straightforward with me', 'that I am clear what is expected of me', 'that meetings start and finish on time'.)
- Swap jobs with someone, or shadow someone, for half a day then vice versa.
- Have a lunch-time debate on a contentious but topical topic (for example, 'mission statements are empty rhetoric' 'everyone has a right to learn and develop').
- Get everyone to experiment with a new way of doing something.
- Hold an auction where people promise to give the successful bidder a useful tip or technique.
- Get everyone to produce a personal learning plan to acquire more knowledge or become more skilled.
- Have a 30-minute learning review at the end ot a meeting or some other discrete activity.
- Get people to read a relevant book or report and run a 'tutorial' session about it.
- Get a group of people who don't normally work together to tackle a short project, then identify what they learned trom working together.

Any activities like these will suttice. The important thing is not to let Learning at Work Day slip by without making it special. What will I be doing to mark the occasion? Two things; publishing the results ot my survey into learning skills/practices, and speaking at a conference in Guernsey, where I'll do my best to extol the virtues of becoming a learning Island.

Integrating a successful development centre

As more organisations introduce development centres, **Andrew Constable** gives some best practice points and describes a new model, which is a further refinement of the process.

Andrew Constable is Director of Open Programmes at Roffey Park Management Institute. He has worked with many organisations on in-house management development activities and currently manages several of Roffey's major clients. His particular areas of interest and expertise are strategic thinking and leadership, managing change at a personal and organisational level, managing people and personal development. Prior to joining Roffey Park in 1992, he worked in management development for Abbey National plc. He may be contacted on 01293 851644.

Since they first came to prominence in the 1980s, development centres have grown into a powerful and popular development process.

Research[1] shows that 43 per cent of organisations are using them, primarily to develop middle and senior managers. Two-thirds say their use of development centres has increased over the last three years and 57 per cent anticipate a further increase in usage.

Unlike assessment centres, which are used for the recruitment, selection and promotion of individuals into particular roles, the primary focus of a development centre is to develop individuals, either in their current role or for future roles in the organisation.

To achieve this, development centres use exercises and tests to clarify individual abilities and values, and help people determine what is important to them in their jobs and their career. External observers provide crucial feedback in the process. The end result is a development plan for each participant which is realistic under given organisational constraints.

The primary benefit, cited by 92 per cent of respondents in the research, is that development centres help identify an individual's strengths and weaknesses. Some 74 per cent claim they provide a sound basis for further development. Respondents also say that development centres increase motivation and provide a 'rounded picture' of individuals, which makes them a useful aid to succession planning.

So, while development centres may be a substantial investment for an organisation, they pay dividends in keeping people motivated and keeping them focused on their own development.

Challenges

There are, of course, challenges that need to be overcome when using development centres. The main ones relate to pre-briefing participants, following up the process and the level of 'resource' that needs to be invested.

By pre-briefing participants, you are helping to manage individual expectations. When people attend a development centre, they often have their expectations raised as to what is going to happen to them afterwards. Are they going to get a promotion? How will it help their career development? How will identified development needs be met?

At the outset, it is important to be clear about your objectives, the purpose of the development centre and what the likely outcomes are going to be. If you can communicate this up front, you can reduce the chances that participants will go in and come out with unrealistic expectations.

It is also important that individuals are pre-briefed to be 'natural', to be themselves. If they try to be someone they are not, they might get away with it for an exercise or for a day, but if as a result they end up doing something that isn't right for them, it can cause them severe stress.

To overcome this, many organisations are now integrating 360° feedback into the development centre process. With 360° feedback, an individual's peers, managers, direct reports and even customers and suppliers rate his or her performance. When you combine this information with the development centre process, you get the best of both worlds because you blend real information from your day-to-day work colleagues with observations from people who have no axe to grind.

Follow-up

One stumbling block for many organisations is the issue of follow-up. If the centre is well-designed, the participants will get high quality information out of it and they will create a comprehensive personal development plan. But often these are simply put away in a drawer and they quickly become stale documents.

'Follow-up' is essential if the development plans made in the centre are to be acted upon. It is important that the individual and the organisation take responsibility for ensuring that development plans are kept live and that they are reviewed with the line manager. The plans could be used, for example, as the basis for a self-managed learning programme or for work in a learning set.

It is important that the individual and the organisation take responsibility for ensuring that development plans are kept live

At the outset, it is best to consider what use will be made of the information that arises from your development centre and to discuss this with the participants. What will the individual do with it, what will his or her manager do with it and what will the organisation do with it? Often when job moves are being considered, or project teams are being put together, the information from development centres is not considered in the process and this is a missed opportunity.

Regarding resources, development centres require people – and their time. If you are using external observers to study a group activity, they may well be senior executives from your organisation. This is an expensive resource and it can make the running of the development centre a considerable investment on the part of the organisation.

Best practice

To get the most out of your development centre, consider the following best practice points.

- Be clear about your purpose and objectives.
- Carefully select and train your observers.
- Think through your choice of exercises, tests and activities.
- Keep your materials up to date – don't just wheel out the same process every year.
- Involve line managers in designing the centre.
- Offer full feedback to participants.
- Provide a range of follow-up activities.

Evolution

There is an interesting trend in the use of development centres – and this is changing the way that they are likely to be managed in the future.

Development centres grew out of assessment centres (first used by the military as a basis for selecting officers) when it became obvious that more emphasis needed to be given to development. An interesting trend is that, over the years, the level of participant involvement has increased.

In the early days, there was minimal participation. Those involved merely attempted a series of off-the-shelf exercises and psychological tests under the close scrutiny of observers. Today, development centres have matured to the extent that in some cases, participants tackle real-life problems and carry out activities to identity personal values, offering each other feedback and coaching throughout.

The trend towards greater involvement of the participants has led to the emergence of PEER (Personal Exploration and Evaluation Review) centres.

A PEER centre combines conventional development centre activities with more emphasis on clarifying personal values, development planning and peer coaching.

What distinguishes a PEER centre from other types of development centre is that you don't have external observers – that expensive resource sitting round the outside making notes and offering feedback. Instead, the participants themselves are trained to be skilled observers as part of the process.

As a result, much more emphasis is placed on the participants offering feedback to one another in a constructive and helpful way. This has proved effective because it creates a sense that the participants are 'in it together'. It is therefore in everyone's interests to offer feedback that is honest, supportive and challenging where necessary because that's the kind of feedback that people want to receive.

The issue of feedback is an important one. If the participants are only giving positive feedback, it should arouse suspicion. Individuals may be very good but there are always areas where they can improve. Likewise if they are only being given developmental feedback about areas they need to work on, and they're not hearing about the good things they are doing, they can easily switch off. A healthy balance of both is the standard to aim for.

PEER process

Before moving up to a PEER centre, you would usually need to train the participants in observation skills because if they haven't had that experience, they need to understand how to observe and evaluate behaviour.

You need to explain that they should steer away from general observations – such as 'he looked nervous' – as these have a high level of abstraction. Instead you want to catalogue specific behaviour, such as voice quavering or hands shaking. People need to understand that the feedback needs to be very specific. Only then can the receivers do something about it.

With benefits for individuals and the organisation, it seems that development centres have a bright future.

The PEER centre itself involves exercises around clarification of individual values. The aim is to encourage people to be specific about what is important to them in their jobs and their career. Of course, different things matter to different people: some value a great level of autonomy in their work; others will look for creativity or clear direction. A knowledge of these values is an important step in the process of ongoing development. For example, it means that some people will look for a job to provide a secure income – the job itself may be less important but it enables them to do other things in their lives.

Two other aspects of the PEER centre process are noteworthy. The first is peer

coaching, where participants offer each other mutual support both on the event and afterwards, where they may meet informally. The second is the notion of a development plan coming out of the event.

Afterwards, the process can also be reinforced through the use of mentoring. The participants should be encouraged to have development discussions with their line managers. Peer coaching should continue beyond the event.

Benefits

PEER centres place greater emphasis on the participants – who in the past were passive in the process. Participants will often feel a greater sense of motivation because they've been more involved in the interactions of the development centre. They also feel a greater ownership of their development plan because it is something they have created with their colleagues.

Through a process of support and challenge with honest feedback, they have an insight into what is important to them and a chance to get more out of their current role. With a greater understanding of their own personal values, they will know what they are looking for.

Assuming the feedback process works well, they will get realistic and helpful information which will help them manage their own development and understand how to be more effective.

PEER centres equip participants with practical tools for managing their development and they help them increase their levels of satisfaction. The process can be valuable in helping key employees come to terms with new organisational realities.

In many organisations, promotional opportunities have become severely restricted. So instead of moving up the hierarchy, PEER centres can help participants think differently about how they are going to develop themselves and their careers. They may need to consider other more realistic options, such as a lateral move or a move into a project team.

Trends for the future

As more organisations begin to use development centres, a number of other trends look likely to emerge.

The first is a greater use of development centres on an international basis. At present, they are not widely used internationally – perhaps because of language and cultural issues. But as more organisations seek to move managers from one country to another, in order to develop their international capabilities, there is considerable scope for development centres to play a more integral international role.

There will be a greater use of video within the development centre itself, to help people fulfil the dual roles of participant and observer.

Other trends include a greater integration of technology with face-to-face development and more emphasis on 360° feedback. There will also be better links with follow-up processes such as mentoring and the use of learning sets.

Regarding technology, the future is likely to see more organisations downloading pre-tests and exercises from a network before coming to the event. Additionally, there will be a greater use of video within the development centre itself, to help people fulfil the dual roles of participant and observer.

With benefits for individuals and the organisation, it seems that development centres have a bright future. Although a development centre can be relatively expensive to set up and run, the process actively demonstrates to the participants that they are valued by the organisation. And that's a key benefit in itself. ■

Reference

1 The Roffey Park Management Agenda 1999 (an annual snapshot of the main issues affecting the work and well-being of managers, £25 Tel: 01293 851644).

Training Solutions & The IT Training Show NEC Birmingham 6–8 July 1999

The 1999 Training Solutions & The IT Training Show will take place from 6–8 July at the NEC, Birmingham. Last year the exhibition drew crowds of 3,677 and this year the organisers are expecting over 4,000 people to attend.

New to the 1999 show are Deloitte Touche, Philip Gunn & Associates, PC Coaching, touch-type trainers Comprix, and Thinking Dimensions from South Africa.

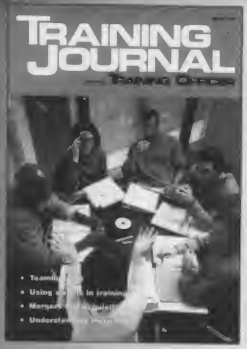
Other key exhibitors to return are interactive role players Actors In Management, Sun Microsystems, CSA Management Consultants, Sift Plc, Paul Jackson Associates, Oddball Training, Forward Vision Solutions, Fresh Sales & Marketing Solutions, Keyturn Training Limited, Visage Group, Winning Moves, Institute of Management and The Institute of Directors.

Running alongside the three-day exhibition will be Training Solutions and the IT Training Conference. The main Training Solutions programme will feature trainers from a range of industries who will cover 'intranet training', 'training senior management', 'linking training to business strategy' and 'why evaluate?'.

The IT Training Conference includes speakers from Unisys, Norwich Union, Shell Services International, BT, Ford Motor Company, British Airways and independent expert Anthony Thorpe.

New at Training Solutions 1999 is a 'Masterclasses' programme to train the trainer. Among those presenting advanced seminars are Ian Banyard from McKenna Breen and Kate Hopkinson, co-author of *The Personal Management Handbook*. The workshops will develop practical skills for training professionals in NLP techniques, learning preferences, instructional design, learning biases and using the Emotional Quotient.

Further information is available from Brintex Limited, 32 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SS; 0171 973 6401; fax 0171 233 5054; e-mail: training@hemming-group.co.uk; http://www.training-shows.co.uk



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Developing your career with 360° feedback

Adaptability and visibility are key to developing your career, writes **Keith Bedingham**. In this article he looks at how viable, meaningful career development can be attained.

Keith Bedingham, BA (Hons) is the Chairman of Verax Ltd. During his career Keith has held a number of sales and marketing management posts. His specialist areas include corporate strategy, the management performance cycle, organisational effectiveness, reference survey techniques and manager effectiveness. Keith may be contacted on 01252 812200.

Traditionally, employees have assumed that if they join a large organisation their employer will be responsible for their career development. The only issue was what to do when their career flattened out: remain, to jump the ladder internally, or seek promotion elsewhere.

Career development was perceived to be out of the control of the employee. If promotion happened, it was seen as largely a matter of chance or knowing the 'right people'.

Things began to change in the last recession, which coincided with new ways of running businesses and the rapid development of outsourcing. Organisational structures began to flatten out, leaving hierarchies – and many upwardly mobile career prospects – in tatters. The trend towards outsourcing complicated the picture; it meant that people were moved out of the organisation into something smaller with correspondingly fewer career prospects.

Post-recession, the organisation had become leaner and fitter, with departments having evolved into smaller units (or profit centres). Although employers hung on to their brightest personnel, among them the much cherished 'achievers' and 'enablers', many conventional career opportunities disappeared.

Responsibility

In the new atmosphere – as business life is conducted today – if people want a career they must be responsible for it themselves. The notion that career moves do not automatically mean becoming a more senior manager is beginning to dawn on those who want to progress up the corporate ladder. However, most employees are not geared to cope with the new situation. So what strategies are available?

First, people must give fresh thought to what they mean by a career. Indeed, they might have to think in terms of adapting to several careers during the course of their working life – changing jobs and functions in order to fit in with rapidly changing skills and other requirements.

Second, they must think in terms of assuming responsibility for their own futures and be prepared to 'make things happen'. The alternative is to get into passive mode and wait for chance to show its hand; this is a frustrating position for achievers and enablers to find themselves in.

Adaptability and *visibility* are the key elements in changing career prospects, even a career itself. In order to make things happen, employees need to obtain information about themselves – information that will help them to make decisions about their career and where it will go.

What sort of information are we talking about here? The answer is found in 360° feedback, which can be used to improve information about an employee. Although 360° feedback may be new to some people, it has been in use for some 20 years but has only become popular since the early 1990s. However, not all 360° feedback programmes provide the same information.

The information

Since the early 1970s there has been a growing recognition of the relationships between effectiveness (as an individual) and adaptability. In the rapidly changing world of today, adaptability is seen as a

key characteristic – more important even than many skill sets. Thirty years ago, adaptability was viewed as a purely behavioural quality, whereas now we recognise that it also contains emotional and cognitive, or attitudinal, elements.

Obtaining 360° feedback about one's adaptability – and about what one might do to become more adaptable – should be the prime concern where career is concerned. In today's forward-thinking organisations, 'adaptable' means being able to adapt to a wide range of situations and people. If you are adaptable, you can progress despite the apparent lack of career prospects.

Some feedback programmes focus on measuring skill sets – usually management skills – while others, which focus on self-perception, are considered by current research to be unreliable. As yet, few programmes are available that give 360° feedback on adaptability. This means that the more traditional programmes are becoming 'out of context' in the prevailing culture. Unlike the people who seek to participate in the 'new way', they have not moved with the times.

Admittedly, for a small percentage of people, the measuring of skill sets is an extremely important function. But it stops there.

Getting appropriate feedback on one's adaptability is in itself not of major importance; knowing what to do – and how to measure one's progress – is. The 'knowing what to do, and measuring progress' are critically important for participants who get an idea of whether they are suited to a career in management, for example, and what management positions are best suited to them. Several feedback tools are being used in this way, but only small numbers of people are being helped.

Sometimes, 360° feedback replaces the performance appraisal because it is easier for the manager. However, it suffers from the same problem as poorly conducted performance appraisals: people are told they have to improve, not how to improve. The key issue is: what to do with the information and make progress.

Another strategy can be adopted on the basis that you learn more about a topic by teaching it, and on the basis that people who are seen to be effective at helping others often seem to be given opportunities for developing themselves. They 'make it happen'.

Rather than become a coach or mentor by accident, you do it by design.

Mentoring

For some people the key to their own career development could be by mentoring others. If they are going to do that they need to be clear about their objectives for doing it.

The goals should not be selfish ones. It is important that they should be for the advancement of the other person and to improve the situation – the reason for the mentoring. For example, an organisation may be installing a new software process that will affect the way that people work. In this case, the IT manager can become the coach.

The role of the IT manager will then be to define how things need to be done in the future to achieve the organisation's goals, and for realigning relationships between the people and between the people and the processes. In addition, the IT manager will probably have to define behaviour in terms of the organisation's values.

The IT manager will be operating in a new environment, one that has been triggered by a change of process. He could elect to stay within the confines of the typical IT manager's role and not 'expand' into coaching. If so, the job might remain secure – although at some stage could be outsourced anyway. Career prospects in the conventional sense, however, might be dimmed. Mentoring is a route to broader horizons and other opportunities.

Change agent

If the IT manager decides to move into a challenging role of coaching/mentoring, he (or she) would coach people to behave in appropriate ways to fit in with the new environment. By doing this, he would increase the probability of the change process being successful. He has essentially become a 'change agent'. In doing so he not only makes his c.v. look quite different from that of the average IT manager, but also opens up career opportunities in other areas.

Coaching is not as simple as it sounds; plenty of people think they are good at it when they are not. They may intend well but they either don't have the skills or the right attitudes – or they do not have a comprehensive model of coaching to work from.

The 360° view

If they want to see how good a coach they could become, they need to participate in a 360° Performance Coaching Programme. Other measurement programmes exist, but the 360° element may be missing from them. Why is the 360° view so important?

Many organisations are looking for achievers in all spheres of their business. One of the key routes to achievement is looking for feedback on current performance, with a view to making improvements. We in our company are not alone in stating this; a large body of research findings exists which supports this view.

Why? One reason is because 360° feedback is structured, objective and manageable. Informal feedback can offer help but is hampered by typically being unstructured, subjective and difficult to manage. Also, it must be pointed out that 'feedback on self' is unreliable.

The focus is to help those who have career prospects in a fluid work or career environment to adopt a coaching/mentoring role. The ultimate aim is to leverage career prospects, partly by basking in the 'reflected glory' of your mentoring work, partly by the idea that those you have helped will at some stage help you, and partly by having a better c.v. and thus better prospects. Then there is the kudos from being seen to be an achiever and someone who is adaptable.

Visibility comes into this, not only from being seen to be helping others and being flexible, but from being a positive participant in feedback (and re-measure) programmes, demonstrating commitment to personal growth and change. Mentoring is not the only change in career (or complementary career) one should contemplate, but it is an interesting route to explore.

For those who are not the coach but the coached, visibility comes from being seen to be willing to be taught or guided. Mentoring can help these people with some direct pointers as to what can be done to seize opportunities as they arise (or as they can be created).

Conclusion

Adaptability and visibility are key elements in expanding career prospects. Several careers may be attainable (may be necessary!) during a working life, but in order to 'see where you stand' in the maelstrom of the workplace, continuous 360° feedback is a vitally important tool.

Adaptability can be achieved by leveraging the opportunities presented by this form of feedback. Staff can make it work if offered 360° feedback (and demand it if not), and by taking re-measures at realistic intervals, such as every six months. The participants should be made aware of the progress, change and improvements measured by the feedback tools.

If used properly, 60–70 per cent of people are likely to show an improvement over a six-month period. Seeking or receiving feedback is a key element in achievement motivation, as it demonstrates how quickly, and effectively, change is taking place.

A more subtle approach is to become a coach yourself. Being an effective coach should be based on some true value, not just a cynical stance on self-promotion. Although it demands skills, strategies and tactics over and above those demanded by your current job, being an effective coach increases your sphere of influence, enlarges your network, and further demonstrates your commitment and adaptability.

Building 360° feedback into your role as coach further exemplifies your willingness to learn, grow and develop – vital ingredients for any career management and development in what is likely to remain a volatile work environment. ■

*Meandus and Performance Coaching are 360° feedback tools developed by Verax Ltd. For further information please contact Keith Bedingham, Verax Ltd, Verax House, 93 Fleet Road, Fleet, Hants GU13 8PJ, tel 01252 812200, e-mail: keith@verax.co.uk

MEANDUS*

This 360° feedback tool gives you a view of your adaptability as seen by your peers as well as yourself. It is methodological and objective. Seeing what others think of you can be upsetting for some, transformational for many.

PERFORMANCE COACHING*

This is a 360° feedback tool that provides a self-view and feedback from others of your ambitions as a coach and mentor. It also provides plenty of 'how to's' for a host coaching, mentoring and change situations.

Components of Adaptability and Coaching

Adaptability		*Coaching*	
Attitudinal	Flexible, self-starter, tolerant etc.	Values	Fairness, honesty etc
Perceived competence	Knowledgeable, understanding, respected etc	Tunes-in to others	Modified pace, vocabulary and content etc
Self-concept	Self-confident, well put together, unselfconscious	Strategies	Goal orientated, pro/reactive, etc
Value	Respects others, purposeful, integrity etc	Tactics	Counsel, suggest, demonstrate etc
Skills	Listening, confronting, decisive, planning etc	Skills	Active listening, problem-solving etc

UK-HRD snippets

UK-HRD is an on-line discussion forum, set up as a free service to readers of *Training Journal*. Here we highlight a discussion that took place recently about the issue of a separate institute for trainers.

Curly Martin sparked a lively and vigorous debate when he referred to an article he had read in a recent publication about the lack of training focus of the IPD. Several prominent training managers support the idea of a separate Institute for training. Prior to the merger of training and personnel in the form of IPD (five years ago) training had its own institute. Curly passed on the request for those trainers who believe they deserve their own institute to tax their reasons to 0181 652 8805.

Colin Chase cannot support the idea of a separate Institute. He believes the current amalgamation (the IPD) seems to widen trainers' horizons, and rightly place learning, development and organisational change firmly on the agenda.

Ruth Page also strongly disagrees with the need for a separate Institute. She says:

'Personnel and development are so closely linked that much synergy would be lost from splitting the two. Examples of the overlap in my role are developing training and success criteria to meet grade standards for hourly employees and developing training in aspects of policy such as absence and working time directive. Most aspects of my role as training manager overlap into human resources management and I like it that way. It makes sense because things are done more quickly and seamlessly, and it makes my job more enjoyable.' Ruth also makes the point that 'as an HR person, to maintain my career in industry, I would potentially need membership of both institutions with the additional training, continuing professional development and cost that would entail.'

There has also been some response in support of the work of other Institutes now serving trainers' needs, including the Institute for IT Training (http://www.iitt.org.uk/). Andrew D Smith is constantly bewildered by the old-fashioned views of many people in the traditional training fraternity. In his opinion the Institute of IT Training adds a lot of value to business as a service provider and a professional body creating standards across a complex industry. Andrew calls for more people to look to the IT training world for inspiration rather than leaning on the crutches of the past.

George Edwards remarked that IPD isn't the only Institute that looks after trainers. The ISM has a CPD scheme 'Learning Together', which caters for those members with training roles.

Clive Hart complains about the lack of specific training-related qualifications, currently on offer from the IPD. He has obtained a certificate but on being unable to find a recognised diploma course in training, he opted for the management diploma. While he found this to be excellent, it is not a training qualification. He asks fellow trainers whether they believe that some of the discontent with IPD could be removed if it offered a diploma course in training.

Other questions raised on the network related to the benefits associated with joining the IPD. How many of those who hold FIPD and MIPD and who have their fees paid for by companies or supported by the taxman would pay out of their own pocket?

We are quite sure this debate will continue to run. Watch this space!

To subscribe to UK-HRD, send an e-mail to majordomo@ukhrd.com with the single message 'subscribe network'.

CPD – what *real* change is happening?

To make Continuing Professional Development a really worthwhile activity it must be focused at an individual, work-related level. **Chris Sangster** explains.

'As you're asking, my CPD is progressing very nicely, thank you very much. I've recently joined the committee of my local rugby club, I attend a School Governors' meeting once every two months, I work in the Oxfam shop every third Saturday and organise the occasional match for the school football team. Oh, and I have been known to go to an IPD branch event or two, when there was a pub visit arranged for afters!

'How's my job going? Well, I'm still having problems with working the team, and my computer skills leave a lot to be desired ... but there's nothing on the cards to improve these. My CPD documentation looks impressive though, and that's the main thing ... isn't it?'

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) implies – even states – that we should be encouraged to identify and develop areas of personal shortfall that are in some way inhibiting us from carrying out and/or developing our professional work role. Yet the recent brochure issued by the IPD lists all the examples cited above as sources of CPD – committee membership, public duties, voluntary work, organising sports events and attending IPD events. To be objectively fair, it also includes writing reports, coaching and mentoring, and attending language courses, which seem to be getting closer to involvement in actual workplace skills development (albeit in a rather limited way) but still, the vision seems to be slightly narrow and blurred.

This myopia is also present with professional organisations laying down rules that require attendance on x training days per annum to 'meet CPD criteria', regardless of the individual's potential scope for applying these new subject areas directly within the responsibilities of his or her profession.

So, how could we do it more effectively? Glad you asked! I consider (Business) self-development and CPD to have very similar aims. The nub of self-development is that the individual is empowered to identify and address his or her own development needs, with appropriate support. This also involves the individual being assisted in making an informed selection of preferred learning events to achieve the outcomes, which will have been mutually agreed between the individual and the mentor/appraiser.

The nub of self-development is that the individual is empowered to identify and address his or her own development needs

This presumes, initially, that areas of improvement exist which can be related directly to the individual's job. But then, if we're honest, they always do exist. These include skills that we can learn to perform even better than at present, and are not merely restricted to competency levels that we still have to achieve. If I asked you the five main shortfalls that your boss has, I'm sure you could list them in a couple of minutes. If I asked you five things that your boss was good at (all right, three then!) you could probably identify them, given a little more time. So, it's easy when you're looking at someone else. Look in the mirror. What are the strengths and shortfalls of the individual you see there? Go on, nobody's watching – be objective.

Chris Sangster specialises in self and team development, applying communication skills as the vehicle for development outcomes which are greater than the sum of the component elements involved – facilitating the holistic effect. Chris may be contacted at The Old Manor, Manningford Bruce, Wiltshire SN9 6JW; tel 01672 563479.

Perhaps you're a bit of an individualist, working best on your own. But does that affect the output of the team? If it influences it negatively, what do you need to do to improve your role as a professional team player? Perhaps you take for ever to write reports. If so, why does this happen? Is it because you don't know how to write a report or is it because you aren't sure of the content, the line of argument to take … or even who to speak to get your source information? Once we have put a finger on *why*, then we can do something about it. But the solution may not be attending a course on report writing or even writing reports on subjects which interest us; sit back and analyse what your problem *really* is and who or what can help you solve it.

Some people find it easier to identify their shortfalls than the skills at which they excel.

Perhaps an important element of your job is negotiating, or dealing face to face with customers or using the computer system for help type-desk activities. The list could go on and on – but I maintain that each individual, given a safely objective, analytical environment, is capable of identifying his or her own shortfalls and needs. Some people find it easier to identify their shortfalls than the skills at which they excel. But then, disparagement is a national pastime! The problems invariably come after this stage, during implementation.

Perhaps the most pertinent question to ask here is whether your work environment is safe and objective. Some managers I know would consider this to be an *im*pertinent question! If you are identifying your shortfalls as precisely and openly as you can (perhaps during your annual appraisal, for example), can you be confident that this honesty will not return to haunt you in the hands of a subjective appraiser or manager? Negotiation contracts must be in place to establish these ground rules and also to identify the role of the appraiser/superior in assisting the achievement of these identified professional development needs. Some annual objectives are missed more through blocks to progress than by inactivity or lack of effort on the part of the appraisee. Support can be through direct mentoring, assistance from the appraiser, from a delegated skills specialist, or through placement on specifically appropriate learning modules.

Notice this last phrase – every word is carefully selected. The content is *specific* to your identified shortfall, the chosen techniques are *appropriate* to the *learning methods* you prefer to use (self-learn, coaching, mentoring, team activity, course membership etc) and the learning is *modular* in order that you can select specific learning responses to meet the shortfall needs as time-effectively as possible. This implies a range of learning resources that have been structured to meet these varying needs as precisely as possible, with the organisational infrastructure to make it happen. This infrastructure will undoubtedly rely heavily on self-study, distance learning and supported mentoring to permit the professional development to advance efficiently. Properly organised, it will permit learning and development to happen *when it is needed* and not two months later when the next available course is planned. Hands up those of you who have attended an induction course two or three (or more) weeks after joining the company!

The potential for individuals to attend only identified, relevant modules of a delivered course should also be considered. This may be harder for the Training Department to organise but the outcomes will be more directly relevant, meeting individual objectives in the most time-effective way.

And, talking of objectives, what is the third cognitive level? We have Knowledge, Comprehension and *Application*. Any new learning – or consolidation of current levels of understanding for an identified skills area – requires application or real, relevant workplace practice. This post-learning workplace reinforcement is of crucial importance. If we believe that empowerment can work, we can certainly encourage the individual to have a hand in organising this experience – thus developing initiative. At this point in the learning curve, however, the learner should not be placed in the position of struggling to receive attention and assistance from disinterested or unhelpful support personnel. The availability of reinforcement – and the ground rules for giving and receiving it – must also be worked out beforehand, for the continuing professional development programme to work effectively. If the reinforcement fails, the learned abilities will wither fast.

This points towards some form of organised learning resource provision. It does not need lavish facilities, batteries of computers and complex booking systems. It does, however, require a decent range of resources and modular programmes, applying a variety of overlapping learning/delivery techniques, to allow flexibility of learning. It also requires some degree of administrative support, in order for it to happen effectively and on time.

Conclusion

'Life', as they say, 'is a learning experience'. Involvement in general team activities or areas of responsibility such as committee membership and voluntary work will undoubtedly generate experiences that have some positive effect on our ability to cope in the workplace. These experiences do add to our total holistic improvement – giving an overall outcome that is worth more than the sum of the parts. The degree of holistic benefit will improve noticeably, however, where we apply a more focused level of analysis and response, making the process more specific and speeding the pace of improvement. This will also ensure that all new competencies learned are directly applicable and will help to maintain high levels of motivation.

CPD must be focused at an individual, work-related level for the most effective improvements.

For these reasons, CPD must be focused at an individual, work-related level for the most effective improvements. As well as giving us *Continuing Professional Development*, the initials must also stand for *Complete Proficiency Diagnosis, Carefully Prepared Design, Comprehensive Personal Diarisation* and *Complementary Practical Delivery*. The application of focused self-development strategies will provide all these, making CPD a really worthwhile activity. ■

Team facilitation: from competence to excellence

Defining what a facilitator is and does is not easy. Mapping a route from competence to excellence in facilitation is harder still. **Graham O'Connell** explores the ambiguities and paradoxes of the art of facilitation, and introduces some new models for examining facilitator performance in team settings.

Graham O'Connell is an International Training and Development Consultant and Director of Advanced Facilitation Skills at the Civil Service College. He may be contacted on 01344 634336.

Broadly speaking, a facilitator is someone who's role it is to help a group to work well together in achieving a goal. Generally, facilitation has always struck me as a rather less directive art than chairing a meeting, giving a talk or driving through change. I see it as pulling learning out of people (even if they don't know it is within them), or pulling ideas, decisions or solutions to problems.

Sometimes 'pushing skills' are useful – to be directive, to be definite and to have certitude (to inspire confidence). As a catalyst for change, facilitators need that all-too-rare quality – flexibility. To push and to pull. To be detached and yet also engaged. To work with people to help them fulfil themselves *and* deliver business results. A constitution that can accept, enjoy, and embrace ambiguity and paradox is a huge advantage in a facilitator.

The facilitator's role

Typical tasks of a facilitator include the following.

- Working to help the group before and after they meet so that preparations and future plans are congruent with group goals and needs.
- Helping the group to create a safe, constructive atmosphere where everyone can make a valued contribution, and where conflict, should it occur, can be handled maturely.
- Offering method and structure to oil the wheels of group process and to aid the group in their work.
- Being an impartial catalyst – enabling new thoughts, new actions new interactions.

Learning to be a facilitator doesn't take long; it can be achieved in just a few days. Learning to be a *good* facilitator, however, can take a life-time.

Competence and excellence

Competence is about the small things you do rather than the clever things you know. Knowing how to listen to your staff, for example, is a competence and not the same at all as understanding the theory of such a management technique.

facilitation has always struck me as a rather less directive art than chairing a meeting

Learning the competencies of facilitation is, of course, crucial. But excellence is not achieved solely through their acquisition. Excellence is *beyond* competence – with skills and experience combining in 'unconscious competence'. New facilitators will focus more of their attention on their own performance, while experienced practitioners will pay attention to what is happening in the group. It's not dissimilar to learning to drive – before long you don't have to think through the mechanics of operating the car and can pay more attention to other road users.

And what of excellence? Perhaps this is about the extraordinary things we do – the things we do that really make a difference to a person or a group. We might help somebody to make a connection that helps them unlock previously hidden potential, or we might help a group to become more at ease with itself and work better.

Some have tried to capture 'excellences' by seeking to define things like leadership or charisma. But it is diverse and elusive. Nevertheless, I applaud those who seek to create a blueprint of excellence and integrate it within a framework of competencies.

My challenge has been to set out the ingredients that make up facilitation right the way along the chain of development: *beginner – novice – competent – excellent – expert*. And the greatest part of that challenge has been the pursuit of the magic that is to be found towards the end of that chain, even though at times my pursuit has left me feeling rather like the sorcerer's apprentice.

My journey

Of the many influences on me I would highlight just four.

First, in the Chinese philosophy of Taoism (pronounced Dowism) I discovered the importance of 'being' rather than doing. In other words, letting the personal quality that is yourself shine through (to illuminate not to dazzle), and acknowledging the strength that comes from wisdom rather than mere knowledge. Indeed, it is tempting to associate knowledge with competencies and wisdom with excellence. To give an example, Taoist thought embraces 'The Way', or the natural way of things. Rivers 'want' to run to the sea, and the clever engineer looking to avoid flooding will clear a path rather than erect dams. Similarly, the good facilitator, when faced with resistance from a member of a team, will explore the resistance and help to resolve it rather than push against it.

John Heider's book *The Tao of Leadership*[1] is, in my view, essential reading for all facilitators. I will restrict myself to just one quote:

> 'Like it or not, we are all team players. Power comes through co-operation, independence through service, and a greater self through selflessness.'

The principles and ethics that underpin *your* approach may be different. But do have some.

Second, for intellectual grasp of facilitation theory and practice, I always look to John Heron.[2] His grasp is not only intellectual; it is holistic. But it is his descriptive categorisation of interventions that gives his work so much substance. This discussion of the range of options available helped me to appreciate why I might take a particular approach.

Heron makes a valuable link between the style of the facilitator and group development (push–pull). In other words:

> 'Being charismatic and hierarchical in the early stages of training to enable people to be more autonomous and co-operative, is a basic principle of facilitation.'

He puts great store in charisma – the non-egocentric sort – and this, along with other power issues, is a matter of great concern and ambivalence for many facilitators.

It is another paradox of the facilitation process that, at various times, the facilitator is required to be 'absent' so that the group must find its own way, perhaps through tricky terrain. At the same time, the facilitator must have sufficient presence for members of the group to feel that the process is safe and worthwhile.

To understand groups and group processes is a must for facilitators – perhaps the single biggest influence on what, when and how they might say and do something. There is often an assumption that facilitators, like spouses, are gifted with telepathy. In fact, it is usually a combination of general understanding about what happens in groups and an acuity for detecting what is happening *right now* in a *particular* group. I must confess, though, that sometimes telepathy would come in handy. Fortunately, I found the next best thing (the third point) a clear set of ideas on what to look out for. In this respect I owe much to the deceptively simple '*Once Upon A Group*' by Michael Kindred.[3] I have done much serious learning about groups but his approach is both practical and humorous.

The fourth major influence is from those with whom I have had the privilege of working, and from these I have learnt the most – sometimes small things and sometimes excellent demonstrations of skill, tips or options.

Where am I?

But there is a fifth point. Where am I right now? If you have ever been lost, you will know this is often the hardest one to determine. In facilitation terms this is all about self-awareness. I have had to learn to wrestle with my ego and a potentially unhealthy desire to be liked and admired. Getting to understand myself has been variously fascinating, terrifying and, undoubtedly, good for me. I am not there yet, but I am at least much clearer about the values and drivers that underpin my personal style.

Learning is a journey rather than a destination. And part of my journey is down the road to my own holy grail – a well-rounded and robust model of what facilitation is all about. There are three fundamental criteria.

PURPOSE / SKILLS	Problem solving	Strategic planning	Learning	Decision making	Team/relationship bldg	Experimenting with or implementing change
Listening						
Eliciting						
Challenging						
Demonstrating						
Disclosing						
Directing						
Empowering						

Figure 1. O'Connell's Facilitation Matrix Model (1998)

- Any model should set out all the basic ingredients that make up competent facilitation.
- It should be a springboard towards excellence, with underpinning values and ideas that still enable each person to be their own best facilitator.
- It should be rooted in good business practices with a down-to-earth language that makes as much sense to a hard-nosed manager as to a sophisticated professional facilitator.

The OFM model

Figure 1, the O'Connell's Facilitation Matrix (OFM) model, is work-in-progress, although it has been used in our facilitation work on our Advanced Diploma in Training and Development programme at the Civil Service College. I have found it be of use in a variety of ways.

The matrix is a visual representation of the relationship between the skills a facilitator may use and the purpose, or intent, behind their use. It is built on a simple premiss: if you can be clear about your purpose and skilful in its implementation then you are more likely to achieve a successful outcome.

At first glance it looks like an observer's checklist, inviting a tick or a cross in the appropriate boxes. However, I prefer to see it as a self-diagnostic tool. You could insert what you do when you are at your best in each section, thus building up a map of options based on your own best practices. Or you could use it as an aid to identify your development needs. The matrix is a framework of blank canvasses.

The purpose dimension (horizontal axis)

This looks at the main reasons why a group might need to meet and what the facilitator should be helping them to achieve. The purpose or objectives of a group may go beyond this model but most facilitated group work has one or more of the following goals.

- Problem-solving.
- Strategic planning.
- Learning.
- Decision-making.
- Team or interpersonal relationship building.
- Experimenting with or implementing change.

The goal, or mix of goals, may lead you towards certain types of activities and should give more focus to your facilitation. For example, a group that has to solve a problem may need to start by understanding the problem, then considering a wide range of options, evaluating those options, considering the implications of applying the two or three best solutions, then agreeing on who needs to do what and by when. The facilitator will need to help the group to analyse, think creatively, to vision ahead, to negotiate and so on.

Competence is about the small things you do rather than the clever things you know.

I find the model helpful in distinguishing between my overall goal and what I am trying to achieve at any given moment. For example, I was trying to help a group of senior managers with their strategic planning. At one stage they were in conflict with each other and that needed to be resolved before the planning could sensibly be completed. Later on they were struggling to make a decision to close down part of their operation. It was a tough decision that, quite understandably, nobody wanted to make. I had to challenge them with some strength in order to help them break out of their inertia – the strength that rattles and shakes in order to enable them to move forward rather than pushing towards a particular decision.

The skills dimension (vertical axis)

This identifies the seven main skills used when facilitating groups. The list is not exhaustive; facilitators can and do draw on a wide range of skills to help groups achieve their purpose and potential.

The elements of the seven skills are as shown below:

Listening

- *active listening*: attentive, good eye contact, using minimal encouragers ('uh huh', 'I see'), paraphrasing, counselling
- *passive listening*: non-interruptive, little eye-contact (but not rudely), still, 'masterly inactivity', silent observation.

Eliciting

- *inviting*: encouraging contributions, permission giving, seeking volunteers, getting others to give of themselves, highlighting opportunities
- *questioning*: probing for breadth or depth, unfolding motives and reasons, a catalyst to thinking, seeking information, views and ideas.

Challenging

- *confronting*: giving feedback about unhelpful behaviour, describing impact of their behaviour, negotiating options, confronting the group (e.g. hidden agendas)
- *setting challenges*: providing challenging activities, testing, goal setting, simulating real life obstacles, playing devil's advocate.

Demonstrating

- *explicit*: showing how to perform a task or skill, illustrating by behaviour rather than words alone, distinguishing good and poor performance
- *implicit*: being congruent in own behaviour and words with what you expect of others, role-modelling, referring to others' behaviour.

Disclosing

- *experiences and ideas*: providing options, revealing your own learning, giving own views
- *feelings and intuitions*: rapport building, empathising, speculating, tone-setting (for example, 'It is OK to talk about feelings'), sensing atmospheres and bringing things into the open.

Directing

- *content*: giving information and advice, confirming absolutes (i.e. definitive rights or wrongs), influencing and negotiating, concluding
- *process*: agreeing the programme or agenda, briefing for activities, managing time, managing group process, structuring, building common ground.

Empowering

- *giving praise and feedback*: being supportive, especially when thinking new thoughts or experimenting with new behaviours, building confidence, delegating
- *exuding (for example, enthusiasm)*: being confident and trustworthy, enabling others by being yourself, defusing ten-

sion or other blocks with humour, being calm, letting go.

These seven skills provide a set of ingredients that can be mixed and blended according to the requirements of the recipe or agenda, the tastes of the group and the style of the cook. There are three key points to success.

1 Be clear about your purpose.
2 Be skilled in your application (but be open to make – and cope with – mistakes).
3 Be ethical in your principles.

Using the skills: a case study

One facilitator had challenged one of her delegates about his resistance to learning. Things had not worked out well as he had similarly resisted her challenge. When we used the model to unpick what had happened, we realised that she had done the wrong thing really well. It was discovered that his discomfort was about change, not learning, and this led to him being dogmatic, aggressive and insensitive to others. When we looked again at the options, she realised that she might have tackled the symptoms – *challenging* him about the impact of his behaviour on team relationships. Or she might have addressed the underlying cause (resistance to change and perhaps fear) and *disclosed* how she, too, went through a phase of resistance. Or perhaps she might have *elicited* information about what he might have needed at that moment.

It is hard to guess, after the event, what might have worked best. But at least she now has some options for next time and a framework for thinking about things differently. Her actual intervention was not inherently bad – it might have worked well in other circumstances. It was simply a choice.

The skills and purpose

Looking at the matrix as a whole, there is not an ideal profile. You can use any combination of the skills when working on any combination of purposes. The key is to use each skill in a way that is consistent with the purpose and the nature of the group. It is this last factor – the nature of the group – that is the greatest variable. Much has been written about group development and the roles people play. But groups are like people – each has its own personality.

Group development and facilitation

Over time groups evolve. If they are well facilitated they can grow from a set of nervous and uncertain individuals to a highly effective team. A number of theorists (such as Tuckman, Bion, and Schein) have mapped out these stages. Some practitioners (such as Rosaria Taraschi[4]) have also added in the focus and behaviours of effective facilitators at the various stages.

STAGE	HELPER	STAGE	HELPER	STAGE	HELPER
GROUPS	**Facilitator**	**INDIVIDUAL**	**Parent**	**NATURE**	**Gardener**
Formation	Clarify, reassure; bring together, set tone	**Baby**	Nurture; care for	**Seedling**	Warmth; good conditions
Dependency	Give direction, coach, encourage	**Child**	Guide and support	**Sapling**	Feed and water
Power-play	Negotiate, involve; manage conflict	**Teenager**	Set boundaries; empower	**Rampant**	Shape; stake and prune
Bonding	Offer fun, challenge, disclosure	**Couple**	Let go; celebrate	**Pollination**	Plant close together
Team working	Delegate, support, be catalytic	**Adult**	Be there; relate to as equal	**Fruitful**	Harvest
Re-focusing	Counsel; help with plans	**Old age**	Less active but wise; be supported	**Over ripe**	Find new use; make fine wine
Dispersal	Offer consultancy; encourage spreading of learning	**Death**	Pass on; leave memories and experience with next generation	**Compost**	Enrich the soil

Figure 2. O'Connell's Facilitating Group Development Model

Figure 2 shows two further directions. First, it draws a parallel with individuals and nature. Second, it goes beyond the high performance stage through to dissolution. It is here that the facilitator needs to focus on sustainable development going well beyond the confines and life of the group. It is arguably the type of facilitation needed to enable a Learning Organisation to emerge. In particular, the facilitator may wish to help the group to develop the skills shown in Figure 1. It is these same skills that enable individuals and effective teams to sustain their own success.

As the group evolves, the facilitator shifts from being benignly directive and hierarchical at the start to being more egalitarian and working as a co-ordinator in the middle life of the group. Finally, the facilitator acts more as a consultant – a resource available to the group, as and when needed.

The OFM model is represented as a two-dimensional matrix. In 3-D it would include the qualitative nature of how the facilitators manage the human dimensions themselves, the individuals in the group and the group processes, including its evolution. Excellence is nearly always a three-dimensional quality.

Conclusion

Let us take another brief look at competence and excellence. A competent facilitator will use a range of skills to help a group to achieve their goal. So what? That is what she or he gets paid for. It is the minimum. An excellent facilitator, however, will make a real difference to the individual, the group, the organisation or even, more widely, to the society in which we live. It's an aspiration that requires both inspiration and perspiration. Ah, but what a worthwhile aspiration! ■

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The influence of fundamental beliefs

This article examines aspects of the 'hidden agendas' people bring to courses. **Karen Williams** believes that we need to recognise and address this if our training is to achieve and maintain consistently high standards of content and delivery.

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The influence of fundamental beliefs is of importance in all sectors of training, but particularly in the area of personal development, where there is so much interpersonal work between the trainer and the participants, and where the belief system of the trainer/developer is so intimately involved in the course design. I think of this type of content as the 'modelled element' as opposed to the overt curriculum content, which is the 'taught element'. It is not always easy to see, and yet it is fundamental to the training, and will affect the learning that takes place on several levels. It is something like an iceberg, where what you see is definitely not all you get. (See Figure 1).

While I have always been intuitively aware of this process, it has become much more concrete for me during the development of the Business Relationship Training Programme, and in particular during the process of writing the reports that complement the courses. During this process we identified four concepts that seemed fundamental to the programme, in terms of both the content and the structure of the individual courses. Although these concepts are never explicitly covered within the training, their influence has shaped much of it.

The purpose of this article is not to convince other trainers that they should subscribe to the same principles, or to defend our position; what I hope to do is to raise the topic of 'What are we putting into courses that doesn't appear on the curriculum?' I will first explain what we mean by each of the concepts in question, and then show some of the ways in which they have influenced the training programme in order to demonstrate how our views and beliefs shape the product we offer.

As a trainer, I consider it important to examine these issues for two reasons: first, in order to minimise any drawbacks such as potential conflicts, and second to maximise the benefits that can be drawn from applying these principles.

In any training programme there is plenty of scope for disagreement or confusion about content, method of delivery, pace or any other element, especially when you take into account the number of parties possibly involved. There will be one or more purchasing organisation, a person or team to develop the course, one or more trainers delivering the course – who may or may not have been involved in the development – the participants, and possibly an outside body who regulates the course through examination or assessment and who may set the curriculum. By understanding what I bring, outside of the stated content, then I am more likely to avoid conflict caused by confusion, because I can be clear about my own agenda, and I am also more likely to spot where there are disagreements, and be able to resolve them.

At the same time by understanding my own fundamental position, I can make the best possible use of the strengths of that position, instead of being half-hearted or uncommitted. I can also be open to hearing what other people offer from a different viewpoint, because I can see where the connection may be, and therefore enhance my existing structure, or where there may be friction. It is therefore a strong position for both facilitating other people's learning, and my own.

The four concepts that I would like to talk about are: You Get Out What You Put In; A Holistic Approach; Differentiation; and Integration. I will begin by describing briefly what we mean by each one, and then explain the ways in which they have influenced the training programme.

You Get Out What You Put In (YGOWYPI)

This implies practice – physical, mental and emotional practice in a defined training situation with the best instructor available. Then afterwards, outside of the training room, practice on a daily basis in a conscious way, with the help of feedback from colleagues.

YGOWYPI recognises that there is no getting away from the need to serve an apprenticeship, to do the time, pay the entry fee or whatever other phrase is used. A related maxim, 'no pain, no gain', also applies since change often seems to have conflict attached to it. The key seems to be in how the change is managed. But of course, as with all training, more effort applied in the wrong direction will only result in more pain.

What we are able and willing to put in, in any given situation, will be affected by our existing knowledge, beliefs and experience. In training, this will include our beliefs about ourselves and our abilities, and about other people, including trainers and colleagues, our previous experience of attending training courses, and our present knowledge of the content of the course. These factors will all affect what we put in – our motivation – and therefore what we get out of, a training course. There is, of course, also an interpersonal element between participants, where they can be influenced in either direction by each other's levels of motivation. What we are developing in this context is the various ways in which, if we can encourage active participation, delegates are likely to both enjoy the course more, and gain more from attendance.

A holistic approach

This encompasses an understanding of the complex interplay of related subsystems. This is true whether we are referring to an individual or a group. In an individual it is possible to see, for example, a connection between thinking, feeling and behaviour, even though each of these can also be examined as independent systems. Modern learning theory has shown that we learn best when we are happy, relaxed, confident. This means that our physical and emotional state impact on our ability to process cognitively, yet this cognitive processing can be measured independently, for example through tests of understanding, retention and recall. Within a group, it is possible to see complex interactions between different people, and sub-groups of people, yet each person remains an individual at the same time. Using a holistic approach means understanding that anything which affects one part of the system will ultimately impact on the whole system, and so using this process is beneficial. It has been shown that different people have different preferred routes to learning – either affective, behavioural or cognitive. By using their preferred method to facilitate the process, learning can take place more easily and effectively. In a group, we know that the role of different individuals can affect their own learning outcomes, and also those of other people. When we can maximise the benefits of this process, it enhances the learning that is taking place.

However, using a holistic approach requires more than seeing the separate subsystems that exist, it requires an understanding of the whole system, and how the separate components interrelate. This is a complex process, as it requires seeing the individual parts at the same time as understanding that the whole is more than the sum of the parts.

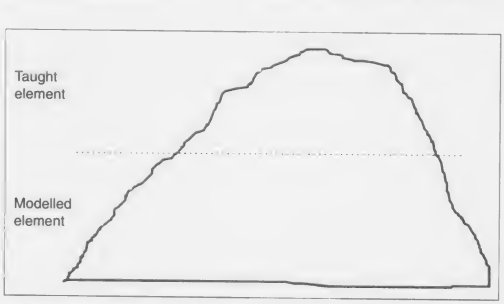

Figure 1. Taught and modelled elements

Differentiation

This is a useful concept in regard to training, as it requires a close examination of a discrete skill or piece of information, which is often what a training course is set up to do. It is often not possible to learn something new all in one go, so we break it down into its elements, and examine each one in turn. We then gradually build this back up to form a complete structure again. During this process we focus on the new technique or knowledge as different, until we become sufficiently familiar with it so that it can become integrated and a part of us.

In order to optimise the process of differentiation, we first need to separate out individual pieces. We can see this as a process of pigeon-holing, a type of filing system which makes clear-cut, if sometimes artificial, distinctions to enable items to be found quickly and easily. As is common with such systems, it is possible to make a number of different types of distinction, and choices have to be made between them. There is always the possibility of making other choices, and the need to cross reference. However, having these separate pigeon-holes allows us to examine the contents of each one in turn. This process requires careful examination of each one, and study of each function, so that it works in the best possible co-operation with its neighbours. In doing this we optimise each action, skill or other tool (mental, physical or emotional) in its own right, and then ensure that it best fits (interfaces) with the others. By detailed work of this nature, when each facet is reintegrated, the performance of the whole is enhanced.

The principle of differentiation recognises that integration of everything, all at once, is simply too great a task and working a little bit at a time is a practical route.

Integration

Having put considerable energy into differentiating and acquiring a new skill it seems simpler, sometimes, to leave it there in the safe area of conscious competence, but the result is that in doing this we end up living our lives in pigeon-holes, each

aspect of ourselves neatly filed, each physical, emotional or intellectual function macro-controlled by our brains. Often the integration stage of learning is left entirely to the student, in the confused aftermath of an intensive study programme. It is essential that the differentiation/integration cycle be completed, since the alternative is continued collection of more and more pigeon-holes, which do not necessarily work together. When new skills or concepts are first encountered it is likely that they will be bolted on to the existing structure like new rooms added to a building. For integration to take place it is essential that they are absorbed into the whole, augmenting it and allowing growth to take place.

The integration model describes a smoothly working organic being where there are no conflicts holding back, and each element augments the others. Being integrated we will act with internal and external consistency, so that others understand us clearly. Such honest behaviour is not easily manipulated and people who have achieved this to an unusual degree can be seen as solid, whole beings who are comfortable with themselves.

Once a new skill or attitude has been mastered, it can become integrated into our existing schema. At this point it is often difficult to remember that we didn't always know it. This may create problems when trying to pass on the benefit to other people, it becomes difficult to separate it from all the other elements it has become connected with. The benefit of integrating new concepts is that connections can be made with existing material in a dynamic and creative fashion, which leads to progress. This in turn means that when we do want to share this learning with other people, we will do so in a way that is fresh, and relates to our own connections, rather than simply parroting what we were taught.

There are three main techniques that we have used in the BRT courses, which show how these concepts influence the training. These techniques are, first, the use of a learning contract which is drawn up by each participant at the start of the course, and reflects his or her own training needs at that point; second, the use of multiple presentation methods for each concept, particularly concentrating on presenting physically, emotionally and cognitively; and last to facilitate each participant to develop a plan of how to incorporate their new learning into their existing framework in terms of their working life – that is, focusing on a useful outcome from attending the training. By looking at each of the concepts in turn, it is possible to see how they link with these three techniques, and so dictate the structure and content of the courses.

Learning contract

By using a learning contract we invite participants to be responsible for their own learning – to state what they are expecting to gain from attendance at the course, and the ways in which they can help themselves achieve it. From the very start, we are encouraging them to be engaged and active in the learning process. We then present each concept in a variety of forms. This provides diversity, and stimulation, as well as being more likely to address each participant through their favoured learning channel – whether this is affective, behavioural or cognitive. Finally, we give time and attention to forward planning and so emphasise the importance of continuing to invest in the new learning after leaving the training room, which helps participants to get the most out of their learning.

Multiple presentation methods

The use of both individual learning contracts and planned implementation respect the individual needs of each participant in any group, while setting them within the context of their whole life – not just the duration of the course. That is, it is a recognition of the place of the training within the ongoing context of the person's working life. Using different modes of presentation addresses the individual as a person who can think, feel and behave, and that we will all do all three, to a greater or lesser extent. By presenting the same material in different ways we reinforce not only the learning, but the connections between the modes as well.

Action plans

The use of a learning contract helps the individual to identify the particular new skills or knowledge they wish to learn. This process sets it apart from existing knowledge – that is, it labels it as separate, or differentiated and ready for exploration. Multiple presentation of the same material allows in-depth study from a number of angles. This is the detailed work that is necessary to clearly differentiate new levels of understanding before it can be integrated. Drawing up an action plan means examining how the new material will fit into the existing framework, while still seeing it as new, separate from the existing methods or skills.

Future integration

The learning contract identifies the new learning that each participant wants to experience, but this stems from a perceived gap – it is linked to what they already know and do. This link is important, as it forms the basis for future integration. It is hard to learn or apply new material if the usefulness of it is not apparent. If the step between the old and the new is too large, this connection may not be recognised. If it is too small, the material may be seen as superfluous or 'old hat'. This is why the individual's own learning needs are important. By using a number of presentation methods and exercises, designed to involve participants physically, emotionally and cognitively, we can facilitate the integration of this new material by providing plenty of opportunity to create links with existing schemata. Structured implementation on an individual basis provides the means for applying new learning to existing situations over a period of time. By utilising the new material in such a way it becomes part of the individual's way of working – it becomes integrated.

Conclusion

I set out to demonstrate the way in which the fundamental concepts we hold can shape the ways we develop a project, whether it is a training programme or any other, and that this influence can be both far reaching and subtle in its effects. If we explore these concepts, then we can follow through by applying techniques that make use of their strengths. At the same time we minimise any potential conflict either with the limitations within which we may need to work, or with other people with whom we need to work who may subscribe to different beliefs. ■

Educational technologies: hip, hype or hope?

At a recent meeting of the Forum for Technology in Training, **Dr Paul Taylor** gave a presentation of which this article is a shortened version.

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Within education and training the claims of techno-enthusiasts have largely been accepted at face value and it is increasingly difficult to question their essential premises without being labelled a Luddite. With new IT in education and training, untrammelled cynicism is perhaps unjustified, but then so is unguarded optimism. Wildly inaccurate claims have been made throughout the history of technology. For example, an editorial in the US magazine *Popular Mechanics* in 1949 stated that 'Where a calculator like ENIAC is equipped with 18,000 vacuum tubes and weighs 30 tons, computers in the future may have only 1,000 tubes and perhaps only weigh one and a half tons', whilst David Sarnoff CEO of RCA in the USA observed in 1939 that: 'It is probable that television drama of high caliber will materially raise the level of dramatic taste of the nation'. The history of technological forecasting is thus littered with either overestimates or underestimates of the likely impact of technology upon society. New information technologies continue this trend. Computers and hyperbole seem to be inextricably linked, in the words of Internet commentator John Perry Barlow: 'Bullshit is the grease for the skids upon which we slide into the future.'

Dramatic, but ultimately false, claims for the educational potential of technology have also been repeatedly witnessed in the realm of education, whether the artefact in question be the microscope, the portable radio, television or the computer. *The Microscope in Education* report of 1868, for example, recommended a programme of national education that gave 'preference to plans which bring truths home to the eye, and with this view it is impossible not to regard the microscope as one of the foremost instruments for the communication of knowledge'.[1] In 1922 Thomas Eddison stated that 'the motion picture is destined to revolutionise our educational system ... and in a few years it will supplant largely, if not entirely, the use of textbooks'.[2] When the sensationalistic claims made on behalf of technology fail to materialise, various excuses are provided. These range from teacher resistance and a lack of adequate resources, to superficial design and implementation problems with the machines themselves (that given more time and money can be rectified): it seems that the suitability of the technology itself for the desired ends is one of the last explanations to be explored.

Educational policies seem to be increasingly subservient to the demands of information technology and the inherent values contained reflected in such glib slogans as 'a lap-top on every desk' and the 'National Grid of Learning'. The penchant for sound-bite terminology to describe UK Plc's training and educational needs in a hi-tech age takes attention away from the substantive issues so that, for example, 'lifelong learning is in danger of being defined as having to spend the rest of our lives learning what we were once taught by the age of 18'.[3] We live in a social environment increasingly

dominated by *technology push*; new information technologies exist, therefore we must use them in as many contexts as possible. Put simply, *when you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail*.

In this vein, commentators have observed that in contrast to a Victorian surgeon who would be confused and helpless in a hi-tech modern operating theatre, a Victorian teacher transported to a modern classroom would find it predominantly familiar and unthreatening. There are various problems with this hypothetical scenario, not least because it contains such dubious assumptions as the unproblematic equivalence of pedagogy and medical practice and an unquestioning technocratic faith that the use of technology results in directly proportional increases in learning. Additionally there seems to be an implicit *a priori* sense of disappointment that education does not use more technology, whether that use is appropriate or not. Success for the techno-enthusiasts seems to be defined more in terms of the pedagogic disorientation of a time-travelling Victorian teacher than in substantive educational benefits to modern-day students.

Cultural extinction

> *Technology burns like a cigarette on silk fabric.*[4]

Despite the oft-repeated cliché that 'it's not the technology itself that's important, but how you use it', there are strong reasons to believe that technology is seldom neutral, and while it brings great opportunities these are frequently spread unevenly and come with associated costs. Technological systems often carry embodied within them certain cultural values and assumptions, which once released into another cultural context can have significant consequences for that environment – the most dramatic of which can be a process of cultural extinction. Vivid illustrations of this process are seen in the culturally destructive experiences endured by developing countries that have either voluntarily or involuntarily adopted technologies from more developed countries. Examples range from the instability caused to Laplander social hierarchies following the introduction of snowmobiles, to the disruptive effects caused by the advent of the motorboat to traditional fishing communities in the tropics. One of the ironies encountered in studying cultural extinction, however, is that Western observers who are happy to recognise the negative cultural effects of technological impacts upon 'primitive' cultures tend to be much more myopic when it comes to discussing the possibly negative effects of new IT in their own technologically saturated societies. New, broadband communications technologies are not introduced to a social *tabula rasa* and it is foolish to underestimate their likely impacts upon existing social structures and practices.

New IT: complement or substitute?

> *... The emerging information and communication technologies are the new literacy.*[5]

Present debates about the likely impact of IT upon the educational process tend to be couched in terms of it complementing rather than substituting for existing practices. I believe that this does not reflect the reality of a situation whereby substitutions are being made in terms of both intellectual practices and the more pragmatic issue of the allocation of scarce resources.

The old literacy?

> *The more complex and sophisticated our systems of lateral access, the more we sacrifice in the way of depth.*[6]

New communication technologies are frequently presented as creating the need for the development of a new literacy. However, this begs the question of what is likely to happen to traditional literacy. Professor Susan Bassnet, Pro-Vice Chancellor for academic quality at the University of Warwick, observes that:

> It is becoming harder and harder for today's students, who I do not believe are any less gifted and hard-working than any previous generations, to read in a sustained manner ... This is our reality, and the clock cannot go backwards. But my concern is that if reading is always a quick fix, a five or ten-minute dash through a text cluttered with all kinds of distractions, will there be anyone left in 50 years' time who can read a novel by Thomas Hardy... let alone Tolstoy?

In an age where learning is increasingly defined by its fun quotient (giving rise to such neologisms as *edutainment and infotainment*) we risk depriving future generations of those cultural resources that require a concerted effort and investment of time to appreciate fully. Reports from such prestigious organisations as the British Computer Society contain such assertions as: 'Schools of the future are likely to be framed (or limited) by "walls of the mind" rather than by organisational or building structures.'[7] The implication of such statements seems to be that students of the future may need to reconfigure their minds to suit the potential of the new technologies. It strikes me that this is perhaps an example of the technological tail wagging the social dog. The 'walls of the mind' that inhibit educational developments in the future may not, in fact, be the old literacy with its emphasis upon the imagination of the individual, but rather the financially inexhaustible but imaginatively limited techno-horizons contained within the corporate visions of Nintendo and Microsoft.

Such worries, however, seem to be like tiny rocks in the white rapids of the information revolution. New interactive technologies are introduced to the educational process without any prior evidence of their pedagogic benefits and with the axiomatic but non-specified threat that failure to adopt them means that you will be left further behind in the IT race to no one knows where. Marshall McLuhan seems to have been proved right, the medium now dominates the message: form is increasingly becoming more important than content. We should perhaps take heed of Hannah Arendt: 'There are a great many authors of the past who have survived centuries of oblivion and neglect ... but it is still an open question as to whether they will be able to survive an entertaining version of what they have to say.'[8]

Resources

The rhetoric of the digital sublime employed by hi-tech evangelists would perhaps be largely humorous if it were not for its very real implications for resource allocations within education and training. With the perennial problem of limited resources, every pound spent on IT (and its software which will need constant and expensive up-dating) is obviously less money spent on non-tech-

nological essentials and the promotion of conventional literacy. Todd Oppenheimer describes how, in New Jersey, the State cut school aid and then spent US$10 million on classroom computers, while in Massachussets, a school district dropped proposed teaching positions in art, music and physical education and then spent US$333,000 on computers.[11] Similarly, in the UK the Library and Information Commission's report of 1997 entitled *New Library: The People's Network* proposes a network infrastructure with £102 million net annual running costs, while the net UK expenditure on books is £31 million.[12]

The proposed huge IT investment in 'The People's Network' contained in the report accompanies a disparaging tone for the significant minority whose surveyed needs included more reading stock and a comfortable environment to read it in. Such 'simple' wants associated with the 'old literacy' are increasingly deemed unrealistic and somewhat antiquated in the face of the technocratic requirements of irrepressible IT expansion. This expansion also coincides with a large-scale contraction of the existing nation-wide library service and book-buying trends in the high street. Estimates record a 23 per cent decline in public library lending over the past 17 years and a decline in book sales of 27 per cent in the last 15 years.[13] This is in a context whereby 50 libraries across the UK are under threat of closure to add to the 500 (10 per cent of the total) that have been closed over the past 10 years.

Dissenting voices

Dissenting voices that attempt to critique the hunger for the brave new world of information technology tend to be drowned in a sea of hi-tech hoopla. Thus, in 1993 Marshall McLuhan was posthumously made the patron saint of *Wired* magazine despite being responsible for such admonitions as:

> The threat of Stalin or Hitler was external. The electric technology is within the gates, and we are numb, deaf, blind, and mute about its encounter with the Gutenberg technology ... It is, however, no time to suggest strategies when the threat has not even been acknowledged to exist ... I am in the position of Louis Pasteur telling doctors that their greatest enemy was quite invisible, and quite unrecognised by them.[14]

Not just Luddites, but those close to the heart of the information revolution are cynical about its relevance to educational improvements. Figures closely involved with IT are struggling to make their concerns heard above the pro-technology hype. Todd Oppenheimer, for example, the US associative editor of *Newsweek Interactive*, recently argued (in an article polemically entitled *All wired up ... Now I can be as thick as an American*) that: 'The glorious high-tech schools experiment we are about to embrace has already failed.'[15]

Conclusion

Many commentators perceive present-day IT to be in a relatively early stage of development with most of its potential benefits still to come. In the words of Brenda Laurel, an interface designer: 'With computers at the moment, we're drinking a trickle from the fire-hose of human bandwith'[16]. The full creative and educational potential of computers may still be waiting to gush forth. However, to harness in the future what is at present only potential, it would seem that we need to put more substance behind such rhetorical constructs as *the new literacy* and other such glib phrases, the meaning of which is clear but the specifics so often left unsaid. Cardinal Newman once said that Napoleon understood the grammar of gunpowder: to enjoy a meaningful new literacy that is more than just a pale reflection of the mass literacy we have enjoyed since Gutenberg, we need to find a grammar for IT that will focus the nozzle of the fire-hose called human bandwidth. If we fail, there is the danger that when the fire-hose is turned on we will be drenched but still thirsty. ■

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GOLDEN PAGE AWARD WINNER 1999 ANBAR

Training Journal wins prestigious Anbar Golden Page Award

We're absolutely thrilled to be bringing you news that *Training Journal* has gained an Anbar Golden Page Award for 'Most Readable Content'.

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The Anbar Accreditation Board is made up of experts from academia and industry, including Professor Philip Kotler of Northwestern University, Alfred Lynch, CEO of J C Penney International, and Cary Cooper of UMIST.

We know that our success is the result of the insightful work of our many contributors, most of whom are practising trainers who write with the intention of sharing best practice. Congratulations and special thanks to all of you!

HRD WEEK 1999: conference highlights

The Institute of Personnel and Development's HRD Week 1999 ran from 13-15 April at Olympia in London. For the first time in its history, the conference programme concluded each day with a keynote address presented by a leading expert.

In a spectacular presentation, Dr Robert Greenberg, award-winning composer and Professor at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, presented his ideas on how a piece of orchestral music can be used as a model of leadership, teamwork and accountability for today's business.

Managing Director of United Nations in the Netherlands, Dr Fons Trompenaars, showed delegates how training policies can support effective working across different cultures. In this excellent and thought-provoking presentation, Dr Trompenaars advised on how to manage and take advantage of cultural differences within a diverse workforce, as opportunities for businesses to work outside their own country become increasingly available.

Dr Peter Scott-Morgan, Professor of Business at the Arthur D Little School of Management, Boston, USA delivered the final keynote address on managing never-ending change. The central theme of his speech was that awareness of unwritten rules, combined with systems thinking can provide invaluable insights which enable us to build successful change strategies in these times of never-ending and accelerating change.

In a fascinating presentation, Professor Adrian Furnham argued that misconceptions about body language lead to it not being used properly and he debunked a few common myths that surround it. In discussing the body language associated with lying, however, he said that studies of known liars – from conmen to politicians- have revealed important non-verbal signs that can identify clear cases of lying. He concluded by saying, however, that "even for the trained expert, it is often very difficult to detect liars." Professor Furnham also explained "Watching every body movement closely can also lead to misunderstandings. When meeting people face-to-face we gather verbal (what they say), vocal (how they say it) and visual cues (what they look like). But paying attention to foot-tapping or changes in the pace or tone of a voice can mean we pay less attention to equally interesting and important material – what is being said."

Entrepreneur Steve (Stephanie) Shirley relayed a personal and inspirational story of how her company pioneered the concept of women returners in the 1960s. She suggests general management training specifically for women and' career pathing' – creating steps towards career goals – sideways moves, mentoring and checking recruitment procedures don't alienate women with caring responsibilities. Steve Shirley also believes that women who have made it to the top should make themselves more visible.

Frank Dick, OBR, former Director of Coaching to the British Athletics Team talked about how as 'players and coaches' we should all strive to move from independence and dependency to inter-dependency within the workplace. He commented that "By being inter-dependent we become' player-coaches'. We are all responsible for our personal performance, our own development and the coaching of others. The player-coach concept is the basic unit of teamwork". He summarised the player-coach responsibility as the 'three Rs': responsibility to be the best you can be; responsibility for your own development; and responsibility to develop others in the team.

In a session about management development, two speakers gave very contrasting, yet informative presentations. Karl Jolly talked in a lively and entertaining way about the steep learning curve Prèt a Manager has experienced as a company, and how effective the results of its training programme have been. Trevor Bromelow, Personnel Director at Siemens plc argued that for management development to be effective, it needs to be both company focused and delegate centred.

In his presentation Dr Harold P Weinstein, Chief Operating Officer of Caliper Human Strategies, Inc, discussed the findings of research carried out in America, which has showed that the personality profiles of managers are fundamentally different to those of managers. He also looked at the factors that separate the best leaders and explained that leadership needs to change with the times. He explained that the best leaders have the ability to instil in others their ideas and values; emotional energy; an 'edge', i.e. ability to make tough decisions; a teachable point of view and the ability to articulate a set of ideas.

HRD Week 2000, which will run from 3–6 April 2000 at Olympia, London incorporates the 29th IFTDO World Conference. Further information is available from the IPD on 0181 263 3359.

Work-based training found to improve job prospects for unemployed

A recently completed evaluation of Training for Work shows that it had a positive and sustained impact on the employment prospects of people who had been unemployed for more than six months. It increased both the chances of entering a job and the time spent in paid work after leaving the programme.

The three-year evaluation, jointly carried out by Social and Community Planning Research and the Policy Studies Institute, also showed that:

- the impact was biggest for people who had not been unemployed before, although those with previous spells of unemployment also benefited
- the effects were particularly evident in helping people to move straight from TfW into a job, but people who returned to unemployment after leaving TfW also had better chances of finding a job than similar non-participants
- employer attachments were the most effective way of getting participants into jobs.

Gaining a qualification on TfW is not associated with improved chances of getting a job, with the exception of those gaining higher level qualifications. This could be due to funding incentives for providers to get those who are 'job ready' into a job quickly without waiting to gain a qualification, and a natural tendency among participants to take a job rather than to persevere with a qualification.

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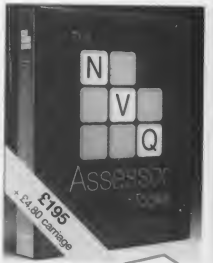

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NETcheck

a personal view of the Internet by Clare Forrest

Clare continues to trawl the Net in her search for further useful and interesting sites. If you have any comments to make, or know of sites you would like Clare to recommend, send an e-mail to her at ClareForrest@compuserve.com

Where to this month then? Nothing particularly exciting although there are a couple of ventures that have the potential to shine as they develop and grow. The first was brought to my attention by Ian Page, Managing Director of Connect, who has set up a site at http://www.omtrac.co.uk, which is the home of a venture called Connect 2000. Apparently this is modelled on a site originally created for the Pru, presumably as part of an intranet, and aims to bring together (and I quote):

- peer to peer learning networks
- proactive e-mail learning, linked to online briefings
- links to other knowledge sites on the net as well as recommendations for further study.

Now, it took me a while – and a good look at the site – to work out what this actually means. However, having grasped the idea, it seems to me that this is a very interesting venture and I will be curious to see how and if it develops. Connect 2000 is, at its simplest, a way for people at work to get the answers to their questions about learning-related topics. Users can either post a question or search the FAQ list to see if their query has already been covered. There are 125 topic areas, ranging from consultancy skills to corporate finance and from leadership to logistics. The website is a working model and every element of it can be customised to company needs – in effect to provide a ready-made intranet.

I had a look at the two sample topics provided – one on Interpersonal Skills (which I do know something about) and one on Derivatives (which I don't). The topic page offers you the choice of searching the FAQs and obtaining information; sending a question to the Network and finding out who could offer expert help; or searching for training courses and self-study materials. I have to say that I found the information provided on listening rather basic – and I'm not sure how useful it would be to a genuine learner in terms of skills development – but the information on Derivatives was fascinating. Understandable really, because being fundamentally text-based the WWW will always be better at knowledge development rather than skills.

Overall I think this is a commercial venture to keep an eye on. It seems to tap into the best features of the WWW, especially the ability to network and get quick answers to questions, and make them easily and quickly accessible to companies and individuals – in effect a living encyclopaedia. I do wonder if it offers much more than an experienced WWW searcher could get through multiple site searches and ListServ memberships, but it certainly meets a need that many learners have for speedy information access, plus it offers a way for companies to control WWW content for their people.

A useful article on the whys and wherefores of 360° feedback is at http://www.2020insight.net/dangers.html. *The Dangers of Using 360° Feedback for Performance Appraisal* by David Lassiter is, inevitably, US based but does provide some insights, although I'm not convinced by the author's assertion that 'appraisals should measure results against goals and *drive compensation decisions*' (my italics). This is one of seven articles on 360° feedback you can find on the 2020 Insight site – most of them written either by Lassiter or by Dennis E. Coates, Ph.D. – the Ph.D. seems to be very important! Since this is the website of Performance Support Systems, who are 'dedicated to providing state-of-the-art, affordable 360° feedback systems for personal and professional development' this is hardly surprising. The site is being 'renovated' at the moment and, while it doesn't have any useful links, it is a reasonable starting point for this popular subject.

My favourite site this month is one that I was alerted to through the wonderful TRDEV-L listserv. (Still not a member? Join at http://train.ed.psu.edu/trdev-l/)

Although not a training site *per se*, this is an excellent way to keep up with research in fields that interest you and http://www.sciencedaily.com . is huge fun to visit, as there is so much to see and do. There is an excellent search engine, which allows you to reference the abstracted research articles on the site. I searched on motivation and this produced about fifteen articles covering recent research. Not all were useful to me, but some certainly were. Apart from the articles, you can join in discussions, browse bookshops and see the latest science news. This is a super site. I've bookmarked it and I bet you will too.

Call For Papers

The Call for Papers has been issued for the Online Information 99, which takes place from 7–9 December 1999 at the National Hall & Olympia Conference Centre in London. The organisers are seeking speakers from a wide variety of industry sectors and academic institutions to present papers on the issues affecting the online industry today.

Themes for the conference are: Europe – the next frontier for the information industry; publishing models and portals – the evolution of publishing?; paying for information; small- and medium-sized enterprises and the information revolution; scientific journals and the web; the clamour for full text; professional web searching; managing virtual libraries, hybrid libraries and the Web document collections; filling and managing the intranets; legal issues in the digital age; building a knowledge community; lifelong learning and continuing education; new technologies, new tools; staying one step ahead; power to the people!; and moving past the millennium.

The full Call For Papers can be found on the Online information 99 website at www.online-information.co.uk or contact Catherine Graham, Conference Editor on 01865 388064.

WHAT'S NEW

Here's a quick round-up of recently released training resources. In addition to details of video- and text-based training packs, we have also listed audio, CBT, CD-ROM, intranet and Internet programmes, along with open courses.

Customer care

Fielden-Cegos Ltd (0161 445 2426) is running a course on *Positive Customer Care*. The course has been designed to enable participants to: project an image of professionalism and competence when dealing with customers in person and on the telephone; get to know customers and build positive relationships with them; use proven interpersonal skills to persuade and influence positive outcomes; and handle difficult people and challenging situations successfully.

Comedy drama for business

The Garnett Foundation (01494 794264) is promoting *Unlocking the Pyramid*, a comedy drama that addresses key issues facing organisations. The production takes a humorous and challenging look at internal motivation, communication and change.

Conference and presentation products

Office Team Europe plc has launched its 1999 Conference and Presentation catalogue. In addition to its own products, it also features a number of leading brands in presentation, including Nobo and Sasco. For further information tel 0171 976 0773.

Construction website

The Construction Industry Training Board has launched the construction website www.citb.org.uk, which has information about careers, training and qualifications. Internet surfers can also access CITB's research documents, news releases and catalogue. For further information tel 01485 577780,

Dealing with difficult people

Dealing with Difficult People, is a one-day training course run by Total Training Solutions (0161 477 6551), designed to help participants analyse and understand difficult people. The course covers: assessment of core communication skills, understanding behaviours, self-awareness, skilled responses, influencing strategies and personal action planning.

Development centres

The Change & Development Exercise Library, developed by TMS Development International Ltd (01904 641640), is a complete package comprising over 40 exercises and a reference guide detailing the design and running of a successful development centre. The package focuses on positive personal development rather than simply measuring or assessing management and problem-solving skills. Various 'no ceiling' exercises allow outstanding performance to show through and create an enjoyable and constructive learning experience. Key aptitudes such as decision-making, initiative, pattern recognition, problem-solving and communication skills are prompted by the exercises. The exercises are supplied on CD-ROM, enabling the development centre facilitator to print appropriate documents as needed, while support materials provide advice and documentation on design, management and follow-up of effective Development Centres.

Display equipment

The DPS 60-TS, a 60-inch digital screen with a 'touch and control' facility, has been launched by Davis (01344 893056). The multimedia station is ideal for giving interactive presentations, using such mediums as video, TV, Internet and computer. It allows the user to demonstrate packages to a number of people while using the touchscreen to guide participants, highlighting certain procedures by simply touching the screen.

Environmental law

Daily, companies and individuals are being prosecuted for non-compliance of Environmental Law, in particular, The Environmental Protection Act Sections 33 and 34 – A Duty of Care. Polaris has developed a distance learning course that has been designed to create a greater awareness of the legal requirements of the above Act, and to put into daily practice in the workplace routines and procedures that will minimise the risk of falling foul of environmental law.

The course will be of interest to all companies and individuals involved with the control, movement, importation and disposal of waste. Successful completion of the two-part course leads to accreditation by ASET and is a precursor to undertaking an NVQ in Waste Management. For further information tel 0191 419 2654.

Exporting

Arclight has launched Silkroute, a new multimedia CD-ROM training and assessment tool for exporters. The product has been designed for use on the Internet and has direct links to useful websites and access for gathering latest information on new markets and opportunities. The CD-ROMs demonstrate how to export successfully and how to get paper work and procedures right first time. For further information tel 0131 623 2623.

Finance for non-financial managers

Finance for Non-Financial Managers is an interactive CD-ROM developed by Wide Multimedia Ltd in association with the Financial Training Company. Using video, animated examples and interactive exercise, the CD-ROM comprises three learning modules – financial statements, management accounts and investment appraisal. For further information tel 0171 253 1544.

Information and communication

Popular Communication Courses Ltd, in conjunction with *DesignTutor*, has produced an A2 poster that sets out the *Ten Commandments of Good Design and Layout*, which will assist all those who use a computer to convey information to others. To request a free copy tel 01746 765605.

Law degrees

New opportunities are available for students wishing to study law at Buckinghamshire Business School (01494 522141). *The LLB Single Honours* degree covers the Media Law, Intellectual Property Law, Law of International Trade, and Corporate and Business Criminal Law. *The BA (Hons) Law* degree is aimed at graduates wanting a high level of legal knowledge and skill in preparation for legal careers in business and in law-related professions. Like the LLB, the BA degree will cover seven legal core subjects. Other courses include Joint Honours Degree in Law and the Minor Award in Law.

Leisure

The *Certificate in Sports Facility Management* and the *Certificate in Sports Facility Supervision* are two new qualifications developed by the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management in association with Bilston Community College. Aimed at junior and middle managers developing leisure management careers, the qualifications may be obtained by following distance learning courses. Both programmes have been written to provide underpinning knowledge for Scottish and National Vocational Qualifications. A range of communication methods – including e-mail and video conferencing – is used to enable subject and personal tutors to support students. The *Certificate in Sports Facility Management* course comprises five sections: strategic planning and policy-making, developing service provision, managing physical resources, managing human resources and managing information. *The Certificate in Sports Facility Supervision* comprises four sections: health, safety and security, service provision, supervision of resources, and staff development. For further information tel 01491 874800.

Logistics management

The Foundation in Logistics development programme from Woodward Ltd (01228 593769) is aimed at supervisors/team leaders in a warehouse/logistics/transport department, managers who are responsible for policies, functions and organising logistics and those supervisors/team leaders who wish to attain an NVQ level 3 in management. The programme contains five components including an introduction, business management, business communications, materials management, and warehousing and distribution management.

Management development

The Praxis Centre at Cranfield School of Management and Shakespeare's Globe are bringing together business and the arts through their joint venture in management development. They have developed programmes that run collaboratively and concentrate on two areas: developing leadership potential, and enhancing personal presence and presentation skills. *Stepping into Leadership with Henry V* and *Emotional and Political Intelligence in Leadership with Julius Caesar* combine technical aspects of theatre training with the issues of leadership brought into focus by Shakespeare's plays. *Presence and Peak Performance* and the *Power of Inspiration: Speech-writing, Speech-making* aim to improve managers' ability to motivate and inspire others, and work on a deeper level. For further information tel 01234 754348.

Smallpiece Enterprises (01926 336423) is offering a four-day residential *Practical Management Skills* course. It provides the opportunity for managers to develop and improve the skills demanded by today's flatter, more flexible and constantly changing industrial management scene. The course, which provides for active participation by supervisors and line managers through practical tasks, personal feedback and discussion, is backed up with case studies and videos. The key objectives of the course include reviewing current performance and identifying areas for improvement, form-

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ing a basis for self-development, and improvement back in the workplace. Skills covered include leadership and teamworking, problem-solving and decision-making, managing time, prioritising and deadlines, and negotiation and assertiveness.

Open learning

The National Extension College (01223 450200) has published its new 1999 *Open Learning Resources Catalogue for Education and Training*, which features over 250 flexible learning resources. It covers a variety of products, including *Key Skills*, *Advanced Book-keeping*, and *Basic Communication and Number Skills*.

Presentation skills

First level presentation workshop from The Aziz Corporation (0171 329 0225) is an open programme that has been designed to improve the basic communication skills of junior and middle management. The programme includes an introduction to presentation skills; tips on the use of visual aids; practical exercises with playback analysis of performance; advice on personal imaging and body language; and relaxation techniques.

Quickguides: a licence to train

Financial Times Management has launched a revised and updated version of *Quickguides*. Aimed at start-ups and smaller companies, this CD-ROM training programme covers appraisal and performance, recruitment and selection, communication skills and modern communications. Covering everything from the most basic refresher courses in contemporary business practices (telephone/fax/e-mail communications, accessing the Internet, for example) the programmes can be used either as a complete course or as individual modules to proved users with an on-screen checklist allowing them to benchmark their performance. For further information tel 0161 245 3340.

Road safety

This month Brake, the organisation working to stop death and injury on the road and caring for people hurt in road accidents, is relaunching *Target Zero*, an information listing service, on a monthly basis. Aimed at all transport professionals with an interest in road safety, the publication promotes road safety initiatives and develops best practice road safety solutions. For further information tel 01306 741113.

Simulation-based training

Simulation-based training products covering project management, supervision, debt collection and call centres have been launched by Adacel Multimedia Ltd. The products are interactive, multimedia simulations of job situations. For further information tel 0161 955 4371.

Technology Factor

ImpactFactory (0171 354 3505) has launched *The Technology Factor*, an open course designed to refine the personal communication skills needed for effective communication through technology. Key elements of the course include: how communication works face to face; the difference between visual, vocal and document technologies; and creating strong, clear messages that carry across distance.

Training skills

Spearhead Training (01295 250010) is offering a three-day residential course on *Training Skills*, which is suitable for full-time trainers wanting to increase their effectiveness as well as those looking for an introduction to the topic. The programme contents include: How people learn; Designing a training programme; Getting time and money for training; and Leading group training. The next course runs in Northampton in early June.

Unvented water heating

Heatrea Sadia Heating is now offering a certified Continuing Professional Development (CPD) seminar in unvented domestic hot water storage systems to specifiers, architects, developers, M & E engineers, local authorities and housing associations operating a registered CPD scheme. The seminar covers the principles of unvented water heating, regulations and requirements to install unvented systems and the types of unvented cylinder, together with controls, sizing, specifying and discharge pipework. The one-hour sessions will be conducted on companies' own premises. Participants will be provided with complete sets of course notes, and will be able to view samples of unvented water heaters and controls. For further information tel 01603 420219.

Web design

An Introduction to Web design, from Tech Connect Ltd (0181 549 0549), is a three-day course comprising three modules, designed to cover a range of Internet skills. Module 1 engages trainees through practical 'hands on' exercises, covering electronic mail and search engines, as well as an overview of the history and evolution of the Internet. Module 2 gives delegates the opportunity to delve deeper into the origins of the World Wide Web. This part of the course focuses on technical issues, including security on the Net and virus protection. Finally, Module 3 gives participants the opportunity to use their artistic skills to create their own web page. After completing the introductory course, participants can improve their skills by progressing onto *Advanced HTML* and *FrontPage 98*, and concludes with the Certified Internet Webmaster course.

Workplace discrimination

Meto (0171 872 9000) has launched *The Value of Diversity*, a new guide to managing diversity in the workplace. The guide gives real-life examples of employers benefiting from introducing policies on the differing perspectives of ethnic and sexual minorities, the disabled, the handicapped and the elderly.

Web skills for the workplace

Blue Ice Intranet Technology has introduced a range of courses aimed at equipping staff at all levels with the skills necessary to make use of web technologies in the workplace. For further information tel 01242 227188 or visit www.blueice.co.uk.

Women's programmes

The Civil Service College has launched a series of development opportunities for women managers. *The Women's Management and Leadership Programme* offers a range of six events, covering general management topics as well as specialist and gender specific issues. The programme caters for a wide range of levels. Further information is available on 01344 634645.

Brian Tucker reviews

Brian Tucker is Company Secretary and Co-ordinator for The Forum for Technology in Training, and a technology-based training consultant. He may be contacted on 0151 342 8606.

STRENGTHENING BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS WITH BEHAVIOURAL ANALYSIS

Marcus Bohn Associates
CD-ROM

This CD-ROM training course, part of Marcus Bohn Associate's Training for Success series, was very easy to install. There are clear loading instructions and a clear statement of the minimum system requirements, including how much hard disk space is required.

The course is designed to help salespersons to build the right relationships with their customers. It uses a behavioural model to help understand your clients and how they will react. It teaches how to recognise behavioural styles and how to modify your own to suit the situation. It deals with selling to particular behavioural styles and gives video clips to illustrate the different techniques you should use for clients with different styles. It also explains the all-important back-up styles that each type resorts to when things are not going their way, and how you should deal with these situations.

The course is broken down into six sections. At the end of each section there is a five-question test, with an overall test at the end of the course. Unfortunately, there is no feedback as you answer the questions or at the end of the test, other than to tell you how many you got right.

The structure of the course does allow you to go into the sections in any order, but is probably best used following the structure. I did not find the navigation as intuitive as I would have expected and there was no instruction on navigation except at the end of the 'Help' section which slowly scrolls up the screen. There is not the variety of presentation style within the course that perhaps we are used to, but maybe the subject matter does not lend itself to having different approaches within the one piece of learning material.

However, the course is packed with knowledge and good advice and will enable the students to improve their sales, and therefore the bottom line for the company, as a result of this learning. All existing and potential salespersons should undertake this training.

SAFETY SENSE

Xebec McGraw Hill
4-course set of CD-ROMs

The underlining message of this course is that you cannot rely only on common sense – you need to develop safety sense. The four subject areas are:

- Keeping Yourself Safe
- Improving Safety Performance
- Safety Standards and Systems
- The Safety Authorities.

Each course comes with a Toolkit that enables you to customise the course. This may be as simple as just adding your company logo, but you can put in your own specific company information, or you can tailor the course curriculum to the needs of different sites around the organisation or to specific job requirements. Each course also has a workbook and there is a glossary available at all times during the course.

The content, learning design and navigation are up to Xebec's usual high standard, and each course gives you the opportunity ot testing your knowledge before you start and comparing this with the mastery test at the end. These tests do not use all the same questions, so it is not just remembering what the right answers were.

The material for what could be a dull, but important, subject is put across in an interesting way, using all the features of multimedia. There is plenty of interaction using various questioning techniques. The answers to the questions are not always obvious, as good distracters are used in the multi-choice questions.

Safety is a serious issue and training is very important. These courses are an ideal way of getting across the importance of the various issues to all employees. Excellent for new employees and for refresher training of existing employees, supervisors and managers. Specific safety training must still be carried out. The courses provide information and also aim to change people's attitude towards safety. These are a good buy.

SETTING OBJECTIVES

CD-ROM and workbook
Maxim Training

This course deals with the subject in a structured way. There is a Tutorial to help you use the course to your best advantage. The main body of the course is in seven sections: Introduction; What are objectives?; Types of objectives; Characteristics of objectives; Objective setting plan; Objective writing tips; and the Course test. It is recommended that you go through the course sequentially, but for those of you who like to explore, there are easy methods of allowing you to move from section to section, and topic to topic. At all times there is an indicator that tells you the section you are working on and the block of learning material within that section you are currently studying.

The course is very much geared to objectives that produce business results. It looks at objective-setting at all levels from the managing director down to those who are doing the work. It was refreshing to hear that the people at the coal face are those best able to identify realistic objectives at their level.

Apart from the presenter you hear from experts in this field – consultants and people who have put objective-setting into practice and proved that there are business advantages.

This course would need to be used by everyone in the organisation in order to get the full business benefit from the training.

Setting objectives is a process that starts at the top with intent or directional objectives and gradually gets more specific when the result and task objectives are written further down the line. If someone in that chain is not fully competent in setting objectives then the end business result may well not be achieved.

This is not an easy subject to teach, but it has been well put across here. I enjoyed reviewing this course and wish I could spend more time learning from the course material.

Leslie Rae reviews

Leslie can be contacted at Ellray Associates, 29 Laburnum Grove, Sheffield S21 1GR, tel 0114 248 3725

500 COMPUTING TIPS FOR TRAINERS.
Steve McDowell and Phil Race
Kogan Page, paperback, 148 pages, £15.99.
ISBN 0 7494 2675 6

Computers, the Internet and e-mail have all invaded many areas of business, commerce, production and services, and the world of training and development is no exception. Many trainers are already using these media, some are considering using them, and yet others have not thought seriously about them as training aids. This book has been written to cater for all these classes and because it's clear, concise and comprehensive, yet not 'mega-rammed' with jargon, it should appeal to all.

The tips are contained in six unequal chapters, each has a number of sections varying from 5 to 14, the sections each containing ten tips. The chapters are 'Helping Trainees to Learn' (with tips sections on why use computers and ICT in training, getting trainees used to working with mice and keys, using computers to give feedback to trainees etc); 'Using Computers in your Presentation' (deciding whether to use computers, some don'ts for presentation managers, helping trainees to learn from computer-aided presentations etc); 'Training about Computers' (training about word processing, training about programming etc); 'Looking after your Stress Levels' (what to do if there's a power cut, coping with technophobes, coping with technophiles, gadgets, leads and grommets etc); 'Using Communications Technologies' (making effective use of e-mail, using the Internet for training, information retrieval from the Internet etc); 'Computer-delivered Assessment and Evaluation' (devising tests for trainees, devising computer-mediated coursework for trainees, finding out how computer-assisted training is going etc). The tips themselves are short guidelines – possibly the shortest is in the first section of the first chapter, which, in answer to 'Why use computers?', responds 'Because you've got better reasons than we have thought of! Well, who are we to argue with that'! However, others are more specific, giving concise guidelines in a matter of up to twelve lines of small print.

The publication can be read straight through, used as a particular reference, or dipped into at will – any approach will produce something of value. The style is humorous without being patronising and offers stimulating new approaches to learning from this ever-growing medium. My recommendation is that every trainer, training manager and training and personnel director should read this book – you are probably missing a lot of benefits through lack of knowledge or fear of the dreaded computer.

WEB-BASED TRAINING
Colin Steed
Gower, hardback, 265 pages, £45
ISBN 0 566 08103 2

In recent years a new vehicle has been added to the tools for trainers, which, if the pundits have polished their crystal balls well, is destined to be one of the more important training tools of the future. For some, the future is here, and the author has presented a masterly exposition of the current state of play and an assessment of future trends. The apparent benefits of WBT are in many ways similar to other forms of distance or non-course training, interactive CD-ROM, and other technological approaches in that the learning can take place on-line at an individual's desk, but there are indications that WBT is more flexible for the learner and the organisation, with cost and time savings.

This comprehensive, state-of-the-art description of WBT is aimed widely at both the strategic level (senior management) and the tactical level (training practitioners). This is natural at this stage of development of WBT as the spectrum of decision makers and users throughout the organisation has to be convinced of its value. The subject is covered in eight clearly written chapters with many screen printouts of actual Internet programmes, some showing complete stages. The chapters range over the topics of why WBT; the learning implications; WBT in practice – some of the different types of WBT currently live on the Internet; what's currently available – integrated curriculum management systems and on-line curriculum delivery sites; WBT in use; evaluation and justifying WBT for your organisation; and training and learning – the way ahead.

Some UK sites – Civil Service College; Glaxo Wellcome; Thames Valley Enterprise; and Derwentside College of FE – are mentioned, but apart from these, most of the sites are in the US which is much further ahead with WBT than the UK. This may reflect two of my reservations: Is all the material offered suitable for UK organisations and systems? And is the cost involved a barrier, since phone charges and system costs are much lower in that country? For example, many calls to the Internet are free or very heavily discounted in the States. With UK phone call charges and the difficult-to-assess fees for the various sites and courses, cost comparisons with other forms of distance learning may be difficult. I would like to have seen some comparative examples from a UK base rather than the dollar comparisons made by Asymetrix Learning Systems. However, the indications are that the overall costs are less (in some cases considerably so) than for more traditional learning approaches.

The range of types of training available is quite wide and the WBT approach will certainly be valuable for the more systematic training needs – system operation, software learning, procedures etc – but I have strong reservations, as indeed I have with many distance learning approaches, in the case of the 'soft' learning subjects.

The Web is with us to stay, and we would be dinosaur-like to ignore what will certainly become a powerful tool in training and development. If you are intending to take the Web-training path or are only at the stage of wondering what it can do for you, read and use this book by an author whose IT knowledge, experience and skills give him every credibility in the field.

MORE SESSION SHAKERS
Sarah Cook
Fenman, A4 ring-binder, £195 plus £4.80 carriage.
ISBN 1872483 66 6

I reviewed the first volume of this collection of 50 activities in 1994. My final comments about the first issue were that 'If your training events are activity-orientated and you are looking for short, sharp, different activities to make your programmes more lively and varied, you will find something of interest and use in this resource pack'. I find no reasons to vary these comments except perhaps to commend the resource even more strongly.

In addition to the activities themselves there are a substantial number of guideline sections.

The activities are printed on high-quality art card in a two or three-fold format. Each activity contains a statement of the activity objectives; full instructions for using them, with possible variations; a discussion guide for the feedback session after the activity; appropriate handouts; a summary of the activity – timing; number of participants; materials; environment; and learning and process application summaries.

The activities are intended for use as introductory events; energisers; changing group dynamics; defusing a difficult situation; relieving tension; encouraging a competitive spirit; closing the session on a high; problem-solving etc, and are timed over a range of 50 to 30 minutes or so, more falling in the 15, 20 and 25 minute ranges.

They are fun, but extremely useful activities that are relevant for virtually every type of training and development event at whatever level of learner. Well worth having for the practical training library.

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Diane Bailey reviews

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LIVE AND LEARN
Peter Honey
Published by Peter Honey Publications, 10 Linden Avenue, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 6HB, tel: 01628 633946; fax: 01628 633262.
A4 ring binder, £499
ISBN 09524389

Peter Honey and learning are virtually synonymous for those of us in Training and Development, so a new Honey publication is a matter for great interest. *Live and Learn* is a composite package containing both video and text-based resources.

Learning is, of course, a high-profile subject at present, at least for the *cognoscenti*. This pack, however, aims to take 'learning' and interest in it out of the hands of the specialist and informed few, and give it to the, as yet, uninformed and perhaps, as yet uninterested, many.

The video in particular, in which Peter Honey makes a couple of quick Hitchcockian appearances, is designed to present learning as something that is needful but satisfying. The message that we need to work harder at learning is clear, but any 'preaching' is avoided, and the pace of the video is fast and furious. Ideas and concepts team and jostle, and the programme hurtles along at almost break-neck pace using a wide, almost eclectic range of techniques – cartoons, diagrams, a curvaceous yoga practitioner, graphics and vox-pops. Accompanying this wealth of visual stimuli is a voice-over with *gravitas* from Jon Snow who also calmly talks the viewer through some intriguing ideas and a couple of useful and catchy models. I particularly liked the classifications of 'head', 'hand' and 'heart' learning, which redefine the differences between knowing, being able to do and feeling/attitude. This was grasped instantly by the small group with whom I shared and discussed the video.

The participants involved had slightly, but only slightly, more difficulty with the idea of one, two and three-dimensional learning. It took a second showing of the video (it would, incidentally, bear watching several times, as each viewing brings another idea to the fore) and some discussion before they were happy with the distinctions of one-dimensional learning being about receiving, two-dimensional as involving other people as mentors, coaches, interpreters etc. The concept of three-dimensional learning as using some intuition and incorporating transferability and the loop of learning about learning took some discussion, but was grasped and welcomed. If I have a criticism about the video, it is that there is so much going on at times that it is hard to know whether to watch or to listen. However, after one brief usage, I feel there is a lot of mileage in the video and that it stimulates a real, high-value exploration of learning as something possible for us all and not just for the learned.

The ring binder, in addition to the video, contains support for the programme, guidance on using the package, and the interesting and intriguing *Living and Learning* questionnaire (fully photocopiable by purchasers of the pack). Two versions of the questionnaire are provided. One is for individual use and provides for a personal stock-take. The second version provides for 360° feedback so that the user can receive information on how other people see their learning effectiveness. Both questionnaires contain 40 questions. The questionnaires address five aspects:

- learning opportunities (and how they are made and taken)
- learning behaviours
- clarity of learning
- transfer of learning
- learning to learn.

Full scoring instructions are provided, as are norms, as a basis for comparison. I used the questionnaire and was as honest as I could be. I pride myself on being a 'life-long learner' but I learned(!) several useful things about myself and my approach, which will enable me to improve the quality of my learning. I will, when circumstances permit, try for 360° feedback on my learning effectiveness.

At first sight the idea of 360° feedback on learning struck me as strange, but then I realised that it was not so much about my style and preferences, as the more visible skills concerned with learning – for example, transfer, learning for mistakes, discussion of issues, making connections etc. All of these are observable by outsiders. Use of the 360° questionnaire would help coaches, managers, supervisors, trainers – in short anyone who wishes to help a colleague or subordinate to learn.

The value of the overall package is enhanced by the suggestions for further action, plus which the user can adapt to improve the effectiveness of their learning. The pack a number of learning styles.

The price of £499 may seem high, but in fact the pack represents good value in its possible breadth of use and length of life. The video itself will not date as rapidly as many more traditionally constructed programmes.

In my view, a sound investment for any HR specialist who wishes to enhance learning effectiveness – their own, or that of others.

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Training Journal
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DATE & VENUE	EVENT	CONTACT
15–17 May London	**Unlocking the Pyramid**	The Garnett Foundation, Trinity House, 11 Cheyne Walk, Bucks HP5 1AY; tel 07071 222629; fax 07071 773059.
25–26 May London	**IPD Recruitment and Selection Exhibition**	Peter Mirrington Exhibitions, PO Box 62, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP29 5RR; tel 01284 850011; fax 01284 850044.
26–28 May Portsmouth	**1999 Convention of the British Association of Conference Destinations**	Tony Rogers, BACD, First Floor, Elizabeth House, 22 Suffolk Street, Queensway, Birmingham B1 1LS; tel; 0121 616 1400; fax 0121 616 1364.
10–11 June London	**Stress Manager**	Open Programme Team, TMI; tel 01564 794100.
10–11 June Thames Valley	**Creativity Workshop**	Illumine Limited, PO Box 435, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 4GT; tel 01753 719926; fax 01753 719936.
14–15 June London	**Making Successful Presentations**	Barbara Malpass, Training Solutions, Greentrees House, Woodside Grange Road, London N12 8SS; tel 0181 446 6005; fax 0181 445 5408.
15 June Watford	**Free NLP Open Evening with Julie Hey**	AD International, Sherwood House, 7 Oxhey Road, Watford, Herts WD1 4QF; tel 0192 322 4737; 0192 321 0648.
15–17 June Birmingham	**The Institute of Logistics and Transport Annual Conference and Exhibition**	Janet Eady, National Events Executive; tel 01536 740100.
15–17 June London	**TeleCon Europe 1999** (Conference and Exhibition)	Helen Gardner, Advanstar Communications (UK) Ltd, Advanstar House, Park West Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4RN; tel 01244 393120.
23–24 June London	**Meetings & Incentive Travel Show**	Gillian Luis-Ravelo; tel 01342 820405; fax 01342 824030; e-mail glravelo@cat-publications.com
25 June – 2 July Derbyshire	**Mediation Skills Training**	Professional Mediation Resolutions, Nora Doherty & Associates, 20 Gaveston Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 6EU; tel/fax 01926 339744.
28–30 June Sheffield	**Fourth World Congress for TQM**	Sheffield TQM conferences, PO Box 700, Sheffield S1 2XB; tel 0114 281 4040; fax 0114 281 4042.
28 June – 1 July Brighton	**Leisure 99**	ILAM Services Events Team, tel 01491 874854, e-mail vents@ilam.co.uk.
9–11 July Worcester	**International Conference on Lifelong Learning: Policy, Practice and Possibility**	Dr Geoffrey Elliott, Director of Access, University College Worcester, Henwick Grove, Worcester WR2 6AJ; tel 01905 855065; fax 01905 855132.
14 July London	**Inter-cultural Communication: Escalating Tribunal Award for Race Discrimination**	IPD, 2 Savoy Court, Strand, London WC2; tel/fax 01923 853072.

Free listings on this page are included at the discretion of the editors. However, any company wishing to make a firm booking may do so for a nominal fee of £15.00 + VAT (total, £17.63) for each entry. Entries are limited to three per company in any one issue. Please send your entry details, with cheque, four weeks prior to publication date. Cheques should be made payable to Fenman Limited and sent to *Training Journal*, **Clive House, The Business Park, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4EH.**

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